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A MISSIONARY TOUR

IN THE

HUCLI AND HOWRAH DISTRICTS

LOWER BENGAL—INDIA;

WITH ILLUSTRATIONS AND MAPS.

BY

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BAPTIST MISSIONARY, HOWRAH.

CALCUTTA :

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PREFACE.

This little work was undertaken at the request of several friends in Howrah, whose subscriptions contributed largely to the success of the Tour described in these pages.

In writing the narrative I have striven to give a faithful account of the Scenes and incidents met with in the course of our journey, and in some sense to make newly interesting the oft-told-tale of Missionary work, in one of the quieter corners of the Indian Field.

Friends in England, who have often asked me to furnish them with more detailed descriptions of our surroundings and methods of work than occasional letters supply,—will I trust find here much to stimulate their solicitude for the spread of The Truth in this Heathen Land.

HOWRAH : *April 24th*, 1888.

“ The sons of ignorance and night
May dwell in the Eternal Light
Through the Eternal Love.”

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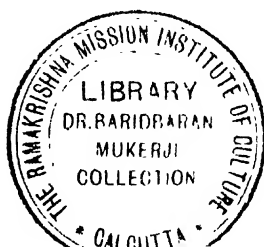
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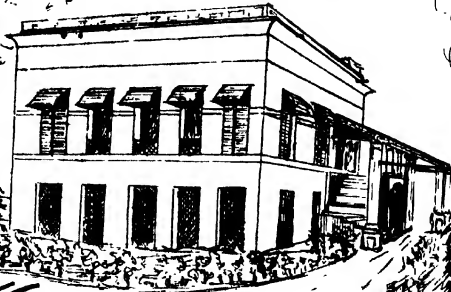
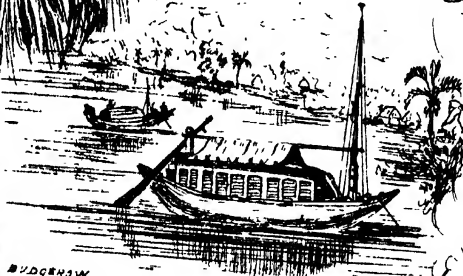
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LOWRAH CHAPEL



BUDGROW
AND PANSI.

EN VOYAGE



OUR HOUSE

FRONTISPIECE



A MISSIONARY TOUR
IN THE
HUGLI AND HOWRAH DISTRICTS,
LOWER BENGAL.

General View of the Field.

The town of Howrah, where the great Trunk Railway of Northern India terminates, is situated on the west bank of the River Hugli facing Calcutta, with which it is connected by the famous Pontoon Bridge, a unique specimen of engineering skill.

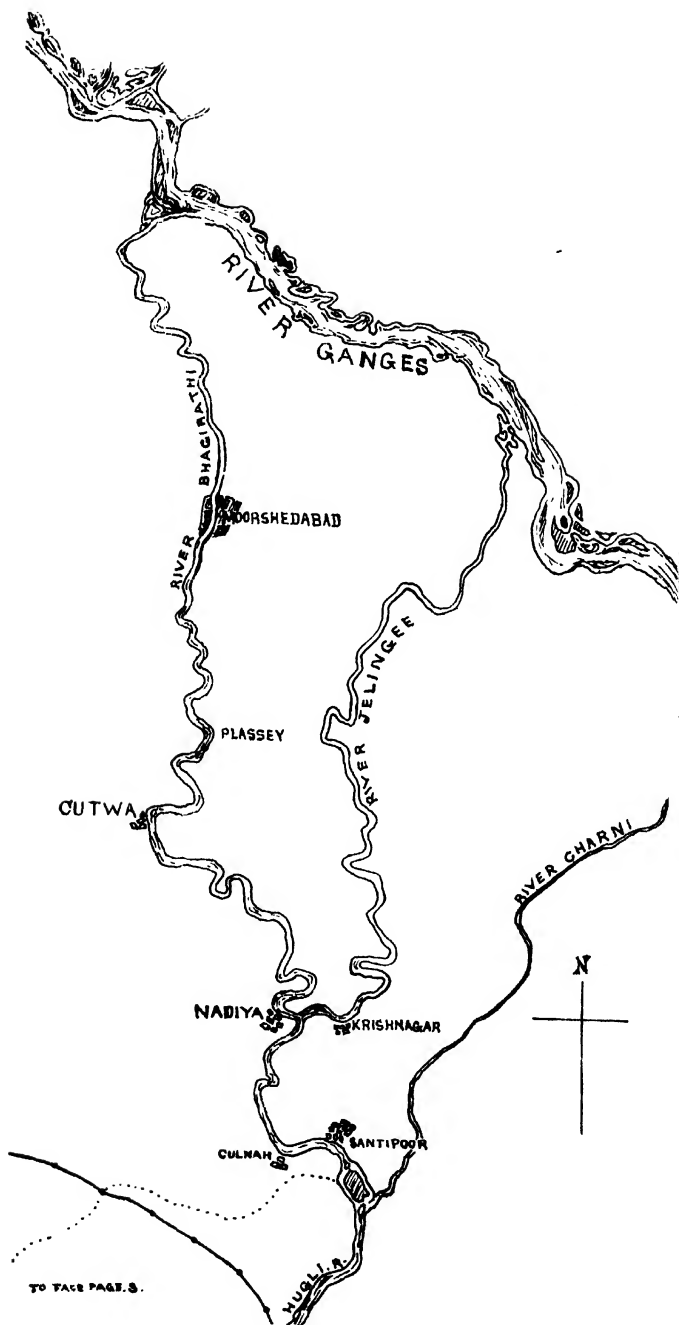
Sir W. W. Hunter's article, a charming and accurate piece of descriptive writing, in the January number of the "Nineteenth Century" for the current year, has already familiarized the world with the nature and course of the Hugli trough, and the destructive effects of its waters upon the works of man. He says:—

"Since the dawn of history the river Hugli has formed the great highroad from Bengal to the sea. One Indian race after another built capitals, one European nation after another founded settlements on its banks. Buddhists, Hindus, Mussulmans, Portuguese, Dutch, Danes, French, Germans, and English, have lined with ports and fortresses this magnificent waterway. The insatiable river dealt impartially with all. Some are left high and dry: others

“buried under its mud, one has been cleft in twain and covered
“with water, but with a single exception* it has attacked and
“either deserted or destroyed them all.”

“In the Biography of an Indian river there are three
“chapters:—a boisterous boyhood, a laborious manhood, a
“sad old age. THE GANGES leaps out from its snow bed
“in the Himalayas, and races across the submontane tracts,
“gathering pebbles and divers mineral treasures. After
“three hundred miles of this play, it settles down to the se-
“rious work of life, bearing the commerce of provinces, grind-
“ing its mountain spoil to powder, and distributing its
“waters for the cultivation of the soil. Thus a manhood of
“1000 miles, during which it receives tributaries on either
“side. As the river grows older it grows slower, till at
“length it reaches a country so level that the mighty mass
“of waters can no longer hold together and its divergent
“parts find separate courses to the sea. This point marks the
“head of the Delta. But the dismembered river has still an
“old age of 200 miles before the worn out currents find rest.
“It toils sluggishly across the Delta. The enfeebled currents
“can no longer carry the silt brought down from the moun-
“tains and plains, they hence deposit their burdens in beds
“or along the margin, and thus raise their banks above the
“adjacent plains, building themselves so to speak into high-
“level canals. The Delta thus consists of branching rivers
“winding about at a perilous elevation with a series of hollow
“lands or dips between. . . . In the rainy season floods fre-
“quently burst the banks and drown the surrounding flats
“with silt-laden deluge. . . . The Ganges thus yields up in its
“old age the accumulations of its youth and manhood.
“Earth to earth. The last scene of all is the solitude of

* That of Calcutta.



“tidal creeks and jungle amid whose silence its waters merge
“into the sea.

“THE HUGLI RIVER *is formed by the three most westerly*
“*spill-streams of the Ganges.* The first of these (north-
“wards) is the Bhagirathi, a very ancient river, which re-
“presents the original course of the Ganges down the Hugli
“trough to the Bay of Bengal. The Ganges ceases to be
“holy from the point where its main body of waters for-
“sook the Bhagirathi and drifted off to the East. The
“second head water of the Hugli takes off from the
“Ganges 40 miles east of the Bhagirathi:—and the third an-
“other 40 miles further down. All these are shallow streams
“in the cold weather. Hardly 18 inches can be maintained
“at many spots by the most skilful engineering efforts. But
“in the rains each pours down enormous floods. The Hugli
“receives no important tributary now on the Western bank
“above Calcutta. Formerly indeed the Damoodar, a mighty
“river, came in about 35 miles north of Calcutta: but 200
“years ago it burst southwards, and now enters 35 miles
“below. Thus the three feeders are the three decaying
“rivers mentioned before. In the dry season, a little below
“their final point of junction, it is often impossible to tell
“whether their channels are open or closed. Yet within 50
“miles the Hugli is a magnificent river, deep enough for the
“largest ships, and supplying Calcutta with 12,000,000
“gallons of water a day without any appreciable diminution
“of the navigable channel. This was long a mystery to En-
“gineers. But the explanation is that the Hugli is fed
“during the eight dry months, partly by infiltration and
“partly by the tide. It is a deep trough, into which count-
“less rills percolate through the porous soil of the Delta as
“drainage from the swamps and hollow lands and more

“shallow streams. So long as the depth of the trough can be maintained all is well, and this is secured by the scouring of the flood currents during the rains. The problem of engineering is to save the three Headwaters from silting up altogether: in other words to keep open their channels for the down-rushing torrents of the rainy months.

“The ‘River of ruined capitals’ is now in conflict with the last and greatest of them all. As yet Calcutta stands unharmed, facing her foe. The fate of other cities may haply be averted from her, since, conscious of threatened danger, she has already with a wise prudence, called in the aid of science to outwit Nature’s design.”*

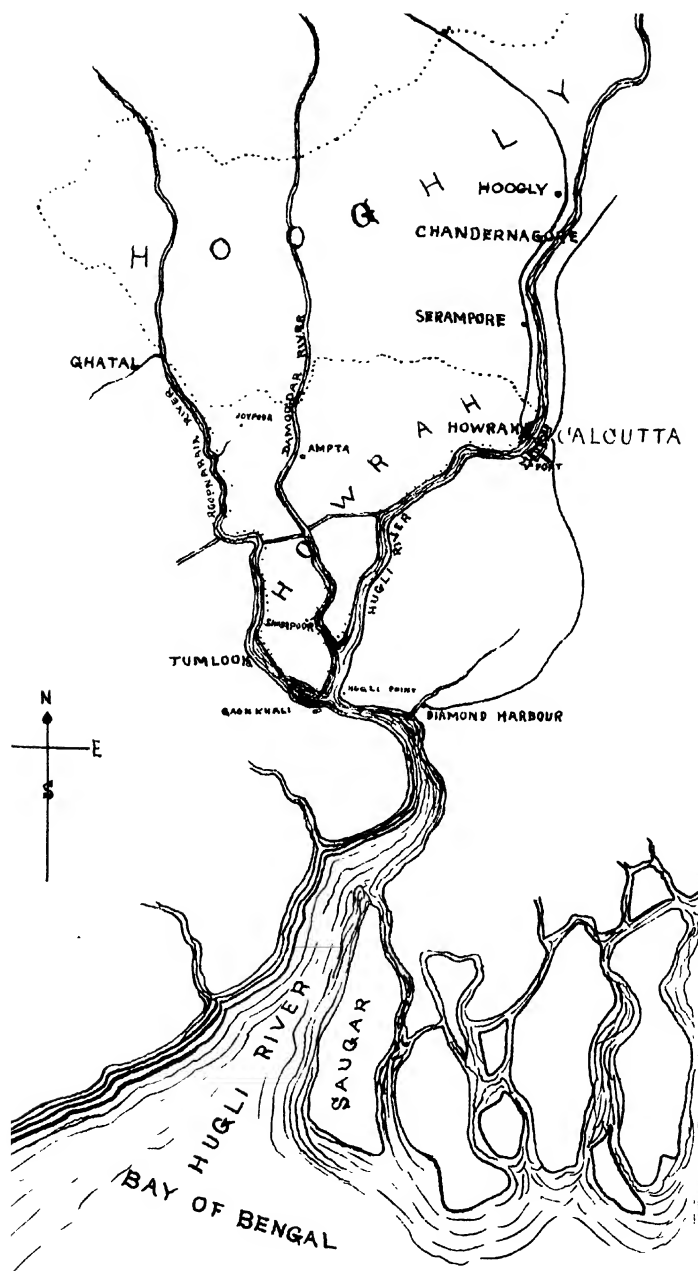
The Hugli trough extends about 150 miles inland, or as far north as the town of Nadiya, where the Bhagirathi and Jellinghee headwaters both enter the Hugli. A glance at the appended map will show that with the exception of a few miles south of Nadiya and a few miles northwards from the sea, *the districts of Hugli and Howrah lie along the whole length of the west bank of the river in the form of a rough inverted triangle*,—the town of Howrah being situated a little less than half way up the stream.

Plan of Operations. .

From this central station a Missionary planning his first campaign naturally turns his eyes both to the north and the south, for in either direction the broad river is ready to bear him to teeming populations settled on its banks.

It was thus that our recent tour, extending over six full weeks, divided itself into two main portions: an up-river voyage lasting a fortnight; and a month’s trip southwards

* Such is, in substance, the former half of Sir W. W. Hunter’s article, slightly abridged.



To face page 44

which embraced journeys in all directions through the district of Howrah.

Preliminary Arrangements.

In preparing for such a tour, our first duty lay in the choice of a suitable boat. A budgerow is the proper thing:—combining the advantage of roomy space, with shallow draft. This latter quality needed our special attention inasmuch as we purposed going far up among the shoals and sandbanks of the higher waters, and the dry season was already well advanced.

A budgerow is a round-bottomed boat, pointed at each end, with high raised sides, two thirds of its length, which are fitted with windows, and support a slightly arched roof. The interior has a plank flooring three feet lower than the gunwale, and is divided into separate cabins: a dining room with double doors, facing the prow, a bed-room behind, and a small bath-room at the stern. Steps lead up from the fore cabin to the little deck where the rowers sit and the mast is fixed. Other steps ascend to the cabin roof, which is covered with canvass and coated with resin to make it weather-proof. On this roof just over the bath-room a platform is fixed, like a low table, on which the “Manjee” (or steersman) stands to manipulate his clumsy oar-shaped rudder.

At night, the six or seven boatmen who form the crew sleep on the roof, covered with a great tarpaulin laid over a pole.

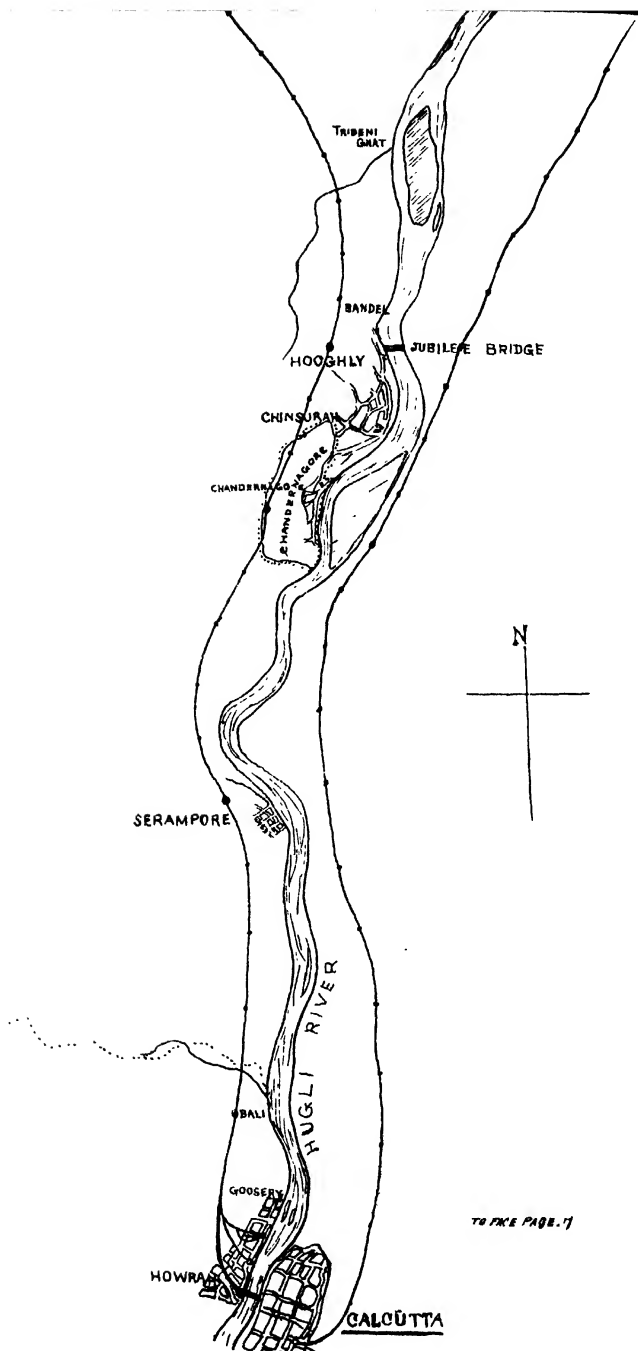
The budgerows for hire at Calcutta are of small size compared with those of Dacca, for instance, which I understand are roomy enough to carry a drawing-room suite, piano and all. The cost per diem varies according to the size and

age of the boat. I walked down one afternoon to the place of anchorage, and patiently examined them all, boat by boat, selecting one of medium size and leaky longevity at a cost proportionate to its condition, and much lessened by persistent barter. A written agreement duly drawn up and signed with the payment of Rs 20 as "*bayona*" or earnest-money, completed the bargain.

This done, it was necessary to collect and lay in a variety of stores. Twenty loaves of fresh bread, baked to the crispness of biscuit, and sealed up in air-tight tins : a jar of salted butter, fowls, potatoes, coal, kerosine oil, and a small case of Homœopathic medicines, being the most important. Then a day's hard work in the boat itself, receiving and settling the things, Tables, chairs, lamps, Beds (with mosquito curtains) boxes of Scriptures and tracts, books of reference, clothing, crockery, cooking utensils, and provisions.

Up River—The Start.

Eleven o'clock on the evening of Thursday, December 15th. The budgerow lighted up and moored at a ghat about half a mile from the Mission House. The tide at lowest ebb, turning point. Dino Nath (one of my native assistants) already on board, with his boxes and bedding. The Manjee at his post, the crew waiting to loosen the mooring ropes. A mouthful of supper at home,—a few hurried "farewells," and five minutes later, I stood on the deck. "All ready, manjee?" "Ha! Saib!" "Push off then!" In less than half an hour I was snugly in bed listening to the steady splash of oars, which presently grew faint, and died away in a dream. Long afterwards, a little rush of anchor chain, and light footsteps overhead aroused us, then stillness and deeper sleep.



Serampore.

Next morning I awoke with the dawn and opened my cabin windows. We were anchored about a mile beyond Serampore. The air was fresh and delightful. The sun,—like a red ball,—was just rising, veiled in mist. Leaving orders for the boat to be moored opposite the gates of the College, I walked thither in search of Mr. James. He, and two native brethren, Bhagabati and Jibon (the former a tutor, the latter a student of the College) joined us here, and completed our party. Before noon we started again. This part of the river is very pleasing. The banks on either side are studded with factory buildings, suburban villas, and patches of native huts, relieved by a wealth of green vegetation very grateful to the eye. A strong wind, from the North, which blows steadily throughout the cold season, mitigates the heat of the sun and the limestone glare of the river. But a budgerow moves very slowly against the wind, even when helped on by the inflowing tide. So that things get monotonous after awhile. With hard pulling no doubt one might cover two miles an hour, but native boatmen do not *pull*—they drop an oar into the water, let it slide astern, and then lift it lazily out with the least possible waste of strength. One touch of nature makes the whole world kin, *they are paid by the day*. The crew consists of seven men, of whom the chief is the Manjee :—five man the oars, sitting on low wooden stools near the prow: the sixth is employed in cooking, and in bringing the “hookah” ready charged with tobacco, treacle, and fire, for the rowers to smoke. The oily thing is passed round and round, each man sucking in turn, and one or other of the five always at it. Thus the propelling strength of the boat is reduced to four men who row in the manner above described.

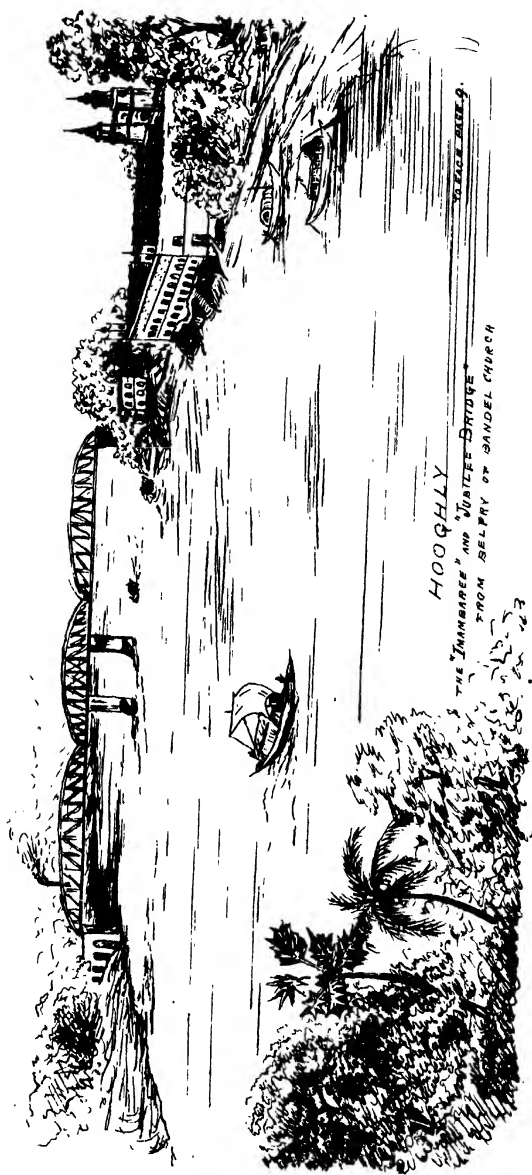
In the cabins all was bustle and confusion most of the day. Our ingenuity was taxed to the utmost to find accommodation for our persons and baggage. The well known awkwardness of the round man in the square hole was nothing to it. But we managed somehow. Our common sitting-room by day became a bedroom at night : Bhagabati, Dino, and Jibon sleeping in it ; while Mr. James and I occupied the inner room.

At dusk we reached

Chandernagore.

(properly "Chandan-nagar" or city of sandal-wood).

This town belongs to the French. It was twice captured by the English in the last century, and afterwards restored to the French, who have retained possession since 1816. A grassy slope now takes the place of the deep water in which lay the English Admiral's flag ship when the town was bombarded. A large fort with a garrison of 600 Europeans defended the place in the time of Clive. All the grandeur of Chandernagore has now passed away. It is a quiet little town, cleanly kept, with a broad strand which bears the name of "Dupleix." The only building worthy of note is a small Roman Catholic church built of brick, with two front towers facing the river. The House of the "Chef De Service," (or Governor) is of very modest proportions. Sentinels of the Guard pace up and down along the strand in bright coloured uniforms of tasteful design. At half-past 8 every evening, a drum is beaten through the streets, warning shopkeepers to close their doors. To this little patch of French ground, covering an area of only two square miles, come many refugees from territory round about, who have reason to dread, and who thus escape, the arm of British



HOOGHLY

THE INDIAN RAILWAY AND WATER BRIDGE

FROM BELPURY OF BANDEL CHURCH

W. H. 23

Law. We could do no preaching on this our first visit to Chandernagore, as it was almost dark when we arrived.

Next morning we awoke at

Hugli

and were pleased to find Mr. and Mrs. T. R. Edwards there, in a budgerow like our own. Before breakfast we all went ashore and preached in the town. The people listened well. Mrs. Edwards was the centre of attraction, seated on a stool near her husband. Fat little boys with books and slates flocked around on their way to school, and drove a brisk trade with the Mem Saheb in illustrated copies of the "Children's Friend" in Bengali, sold at four for a pice. Pictures are popular all the world over. Some of these boys wore English knickerbocker suits, and most of them had socks and patent leather shoes, but no hats. They were children of the well-to-do class learning English at the Government School.

Hugli was a famous town under the Portuguese and a great resort of sea-going trade long before Calcutta was thought of. The Mahommedans captured it in 1632 and found 300 large vessels lying in the harbour. But the smallest ship of modern commerce cannot now approach it.

Remains of ancient greatness still line the town front :— bits of the old river wall, and fragments of buttressed houses.

After our preaching we visited the Imambaree, a splendid mosque built out of funds accumulated from an endowment left by a wealthy gentleman, Muhammad Mohsin. The clause in his will which embodies the gift is written in Persian and English on the wall, facing the river. The English is difficult to read, being without capitals and marks of punctuation. But we patiently spelt it out, gazing

up with the morning sun full in our eyes. One of the attendants told us that the building in its present state was finished by order of Government forty years ago. It is oblong in shape, enclosing a spacious courtyard, open to the sky. The back end faces the river, and forms the great Hall of the mosque,—which is profusely adorned in the Muhammadan style. The inner walls are painted with inscriptions from the Kuran in blue and red. Lamps and chandeliers of all colours hang from the roof. The floor is paved with dark marble. There is a space in the middle, having a platform at one end, seven steps high, on which the Moulvie sits to recite passages from the Kuran at the weekly service. Two corridors run along the sides of this inner space. The right corridor is screened off and contains the tombs of Husseen and Hassain. The left corridor is open, and faces the great courtyard already mentioned. One side only of the Moulvie's pulpit can be seen. It is overlaid with plates of solid silver about a foot square, richly chased. Behind the Dais is a curtained gallery where the women are allowed to sit during the performances of the Mohurrun festival. They listen, but see nothing.

The front entrance to the mosque is a broad gateway beautifully embossed, and surmounted by a pair of round towers with a clock set between them. But the sun-dial on the ghat at the other end is the more reliable chronicler of time. We asked to see any MSS. or other documents that might be kept in the place, but were refused the favour. The keeper of the building is called a Mutwali and gets Rs. 700 a month. Not one of the attendants who took us round could read a word of the inscriptions on the walls. The buildings on either side of the courtyard are used as store-rooms for the gew-gaws of the Mohurrun procession.



"BANDEL CHURCH"

TO F.A.O. PAGE 11.

One of these, a kind of throne, made of cardboard and tinsel, we saw and smiled at. Just below the Imambaree, the new Jubilee Bridge seems to cross the sky, high up in air, while native boats "crawl like flies underneath."

After breakfast Bhagabati, Jibon, and I set off to visit the Bandel church. This is the oldest house of Christian worship in Bengal. The tower and belfry rise above the trees on the river bank, a little way beyond Hugli town. The front wall of the church is finished as a triangle above the roof, with a cross at the apex. This triangle is pierced in the centre so as to form a small Gothic arch in which stands aloft a richly draped figure of the Virgin in blue and gold, with a garland of fresh rosemaries round her neck. Two lamps ever lit by her side served as beacons for centuries to the European ships which can never again ascend the river. We went up to the roof of the church and found at the feet of the Virgin a little toy ship with a sealed letter fastened in the rigging and directed in pencil :—

"To our dear mother."

The church was built in 1599. It contains no painting worthy of note. I was struck by a marble slab in the aisle, to the memory of an ayah, dated 1822. The ayah who could earn such a token of gratitude now-a-days would be a curiosity. We clambered up shaky ladders to the Belfry chamber, and got a fine view from thence of the river, the Imambaree, and the Bridge. Jibon was delighted with the dusty old tower. He had never seen anything like it. Suddenly, without warning, off went a big bell close to his ear, with a "dong" that scared him like a ghost. He fixed his eyes on that bell and never took them off till we got below. He went down the steps backwards, watching it, lest it should strike him again unawares.

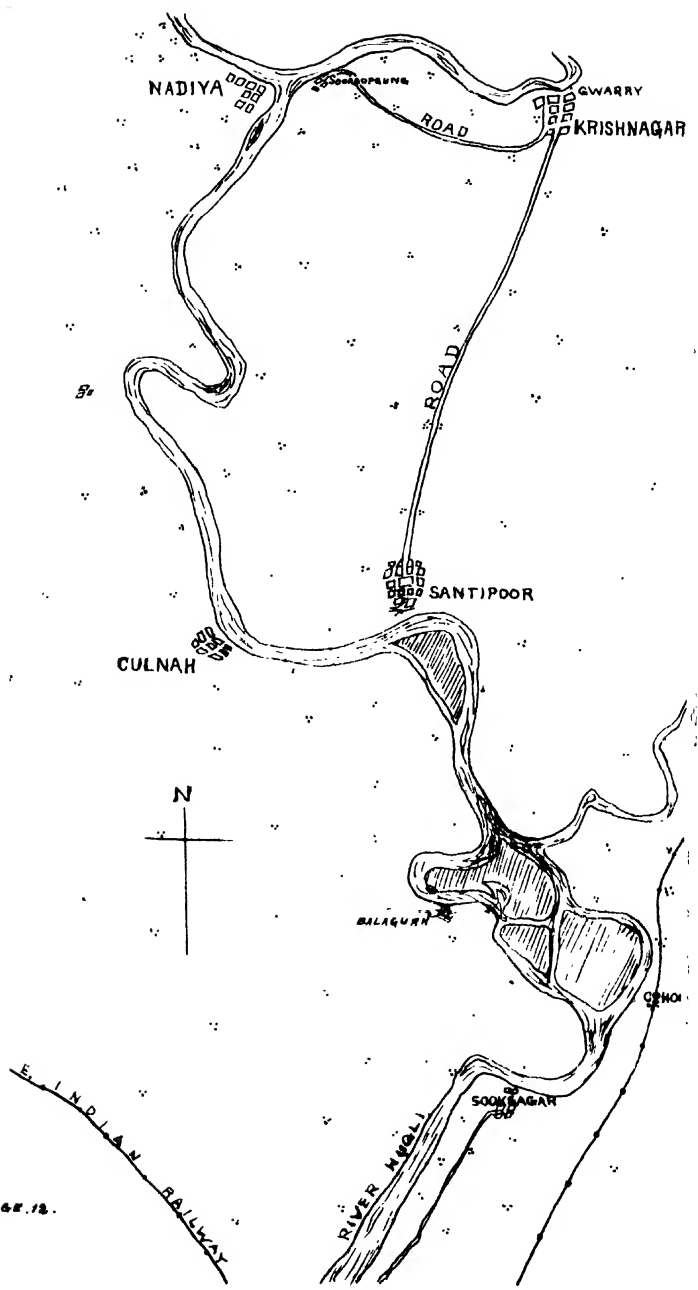
We left Hugli the same afternoon and pursued our way up the stream. From this point the river is a mere record of ruin. Distant high banks now separated from the water by emerald flats, show where the broad current once flowed. Old names such as "Sooksagar" (Sea of Delight) prove the existence of ancient lakes, where the river now winds through a narrow channel in the midst of shoals and churs. Anchoring off Tribeni ghat at sunset, we pushed on again the following day with the first flash of dawn. Our object was to get as far up the river as possible first, and then work slowly back.

At noon we reached

Balagurh.

It is a large sleepy village. I preached through the main street from house to house, but found great difficulty in selling books, and felt some depression owing to the midday heat. Half a dozen boys gathered round the boat as we prepared to leave, and Mr. James propounded a riddle to test their wits. "A man wanted to cross over Howrah Bridge. The toll is one pice. He didn't steal a pice, or borrow a pice, or earn a pice, or find a pice, and no one gave him a pice, yet he paid the pice and went across: How did he do it?" "God gave him a pice," said one of the boys, not at all puzzled by the query, and evidently thinking such a miracle common place enough. Idolatry prepares the mind to believe any thing on the smallest evidence and even without any evidence at all. "No," said Mr. James, "he had *half* a pice, borrowed another half, and so went across." They understood and walked off laughing, doubtless to perpetuate the Saheb's riddle and puzzle all their relations.

At dusk we noticed two mangy dogs, tearing off the flesh



of a dead man's leg at the water's edge :—while eight black vultures sat perched above awaiting their share. It was a sight to sicken the strongest. The following day we ran foul of the sandbanks, some of which stretch unseen, almost from shore to shore. Once we were stuck for more than an hour, in mid-stream. Mr. James improved the occasion by taking a bath, and wading off to the bank through water, in some places, up to his chin. I watched his white limbs disporting themselves in the cool limpid stream with delicious freedom, and the spell could not be resisted. Five minutes of hesitation and then I too plunged in with a header from the prow ! Not long after we observed with amazement a full-grown crocodile, basking on a low ledge of sand, on the opposite shore. We crossed over in the boat to get a nearer look at the brute. But the moment our feet touched *terra firma*, without splash or ripple, he glided into the stream, leaving a scaly impress on the sand, perfect from snout to tail, which measured eleven lengths of Mr. James's foot. This part of the river is infested with them. We saw several afterwards, and were fain to forego the luxury of another dive. Doubtless, had he observed them, our aquatic gambols would have been very attractive in the crocodile's eyes : but it was hardly a pleasant reflection for us that his gleaming teeth might have closed over our soft inviting legs. We almost felt the sensation of scrunched bone, and bleeding flesh. When one of these fellows is shot,—it is quite a common thing to find inside his stomach a collection of ornaments ;—women's anklets, bangles, earrings, and children's trinkets :—all that remains of man's a horrible feast in the darker depths of the river. At 2 o'clock we arrived at

Culnah

a small town which owes its prosperity mainly to the fact that the Maharajah of Burdwan has an establishment there. The whole place belongs to him. It is conveniently situated on the banks of the river, and is the Maharajah's favourite resort when he wishes to bathe in the sacred stream. The royal seat is surrounded by extensive grounds, well laid out. Gardens, avenues, tanks, and temples, abound. Sentries with fixed bayonets guard the entrance gates. I obtained permission to enter, and wandered all over the place. The house is a one-storied building of small dimensions, with the principal hall fitted up as a throne-room. The old king recently died, but his portrait on a silken banner is kept hanging in front of the vacant throne, and is supplied with food at regular hours just as though it were the king himself, while clarionet players of the Royal band entertain the effigy with music. We preached to the people of Culnah at various corners of the bazar, and spoke to many in their shops and private houses of the King of kings. There was a strong disposition to ridicule our message and treat us with contempt, which was difficult to bear. Only four copies of the Gospel were sold. This saddened and depressed us. The next afternoon we came to

Nadiya,

the old Hindu capital of Bengal, and one of the four great seats of Sanskrit learning. It is situated at the confluence of the two upper head waters of the Hugli, 65 miles above Calcutta. "From Nadiya the last Hindu king of Bengal, on the approach of the Muhammadan invader in 1203, fled from his palace in the middle of dinner." Here too "Chaitanya," was born, the Luther of Bengal. He taught the abo-

lition of caste, allowed widows to remarry, and preached salvation by faith in Vishnu; about the same time that the great German Reformer was urging similar faith in our Lord Jesus Christ. Chaitanya, sickened by a shortlived popularity, at length plunged into the Sea, and so ended a career full of deep disappointment. Such at least is the common tradition concerning his death, though many give a different account. From the dawn of history Sanskrit colleges in Nadiya have taught the youth of Hindu generations the study of their sacred books. The old city lies somewhere in the bed of the river, buried under deposits of silt. "Nearly all the great scholars of Oriental learning visited Nadiya in their time. Sir William Jones spent three months a year here. Dr. Carey in 1794 appeared inclined to settle at Nadiya. Dr. Leyden was magistrate of the place for several months;—and Dr. H. H. Wilson also appears as a pilgrim at this shrine of learning. The past of Nadiya raises very high expectations, but its present state is disappointing. It is not an ancient city with venerable ruins, crowds of temples, a great population, and time-honoured *tolis* (Sanskrit Schools) in every street, with numbers of learned pandits such as one might expect from its antiquity. All that meets the eye is a small rural town with little clusters of habitations, and a community of Brahmins busied with earning their bread rather than in acquiring a profitless learning."

The place is still subject every rainy season to fresh encroachments of the river. Deserted huts, and broken mudwalls line the irregular bank. The bazar is a crowded nest of narrow lanes. A large temple of Sheeb occupies the centre of the town, and stands in an open square. The banks of the river below Nadiya for about a mile are strewn with relics of the dead. Greasy pillows, half burnt stakes, skulls, earthen

pots, bedsteads, dirty sheets, hookahs, little heaps of black ashes, and whitened human bones. The Hindu method of cremation fills a stranger with feelings of intense disgust

We watched the whole process as we drew near to this historic town. The body of a man was brought to the edge of the river and set down. Four stakes were then driven into the sand, and a little bundle of firewood laid between them. The sheet in which the corpse was wound having been flung aside, the body was placed on its back over the wood, the knees spread apart and the feet bent underneath. One of the attendants then sprinkled a few shavings over the limbs, and anointed the corpse with "ghee",—an oily kind of butter. Fire was first applied to the mouth and then to the pile of wood. The men sat a little way off, while the body slowly roasted, chatting unconcernedly over their hookah, and ever and anon adding fuel to the pile.

Village dogs were slinking around and long-necked vultures watched the scene from neighbouring trees. We knew that presently the half-consumed body, would be pitched off the fire, and go hissing into the water, whence the dogs would seize it, and tear it limb from limb, and be joined by the vultures in their loathsome feast. The winding sheet, pillow, and bedstead of the deceased, together with cooking pots &c. &c., are always left just where they were flung aside when the burning took place. A dozen or two of such spots darkening the sand, makes one shudder.

Toll is levied at Nadiya on all boats passing up or down. The tax varies according to size and draft. We preached for three hours in the bazaar after our arrival. the narrow streets being completely blocked by the crowd that gathered to listen. Few books were purchased, the place being well supplied by the Church Missionaries of Krishnagar. Two

Brahmins followed us at nightfall to the boat, and discussed with us for about an hour.

Next morning we preached again, taking our stand in the square opposite the temple of Shceb, and selling a larger number of books. After this I visited one of the schools which had just assembled, and spoke to the boys. Nadiya is a place of evil repute. It is the seat of a special sect devoted to the worship of Krishna, and living in open sin under the shadow of his example. We left at noon, and sailed on up the river Bhagirathi. Mr. James and I walked through the villages along the left bank, preaching as we went. At one house we found two intelligent young men studying a manuscript translation of the "Upanishads" into Bengali, and making marginal notes. One of them had come all the way from Ampta in Howrah district to receive religious instruction. His "gooroo" or tutor provides him with free board and lodging besides the tuition. There are hundreds of such teachers throughout Bengal. A little further on we entered the large village of

Purbasthali

and engaged in a very profitable discussion with the head schoolmaster of the place in the presence of a great crowd. He could speak English well. Mr. James afterwards preached in Bengali with remarkable energy and spiritual power. The people were astonished and said they had never heard the like. One Babu bought an English Bible, in which we wrote our names with the date. Some others boasted to me that one of Dr. Carey's Pandits, "Ramkoomar Roy," was a native of this village. It was late when we left, and our boat was anchored a long way off; but the walk was delightful, through a fairy scene not soon to be forgotten. The

broad river fringed with tropical forest :—a white path winding amongst the trees :—the whole bathed in the glamour and touched with the witchery of Indian moonlight.

Next morning at daybreak, we attempted to continue our course, but were foiled by the exceeding narrowness of the navigable channel, and the violence of the down current against which the budgerow could make no way. Reluctantly we turned her head, and dropped swiftly back with the tide to Soorooopunge. From here we set off after breakfast, to walk to

Krishnagar

a distance by road of seven miles. The sun blazed overhead and the sandy road burned under foot. We reached "Gwarry," a suburb of Krishnagar at 4 o'clock. The station is one of the prettiest in Bengal :—very little marshy land ; and broad avenues shading good pucca roads. We passed the Government College, a long white building, which made a pretty background for some multitudes of students and visitors, dressed in bright coloured shawls, who were watching a cricket match on the lawn. We then called upon Mr. Santer, the C. M. S. Missionary, who received us very kindly and refreshed us with a cup of tea after our dusty walk. He spoke freely of his work, its difficulties and promise. The Church Mission has a community of 6000 Christians in the Krishnagar district. Most of them are held lightly, however, owing to persistent endeavours on the part of Roman Catholic neighbours to sweep them into the fold of the Romish Church. Gentle nuns visit them in sickness, and every other inducement is offered them to forsake their present communion. Mr. Santer having courteously complied with our wish to preach in the bazar, we set out and were soon busily working

at separate points. Mr. James addressed a large gathering of educated Babus on the strand, and with such power, that they could not conceal their astonishment and delight. One Christian brother, a poor man, seemed too overjoyed at our visit to express himself in words. He went to a shop and insisted on purchasing for us a meal of sweetmeats, and begged us to spend a few minutes under his roof before going away. It was very pleasant to be thus welcomed, though I felt rather sick after the greasy ball of sugar, which, rather than slight his kindliness, I had forced myself to eat. Leaving Bhagabati, Dino, and Jibon, to continue the feast and follow at their leisure, Mr. James and I at last set off for the walk back to Soorooopgunge. It was a dark night, we were wrongly directed, and so lost our way. We soon found that we were trending off towards Santipoor* at the rate of five miles an hour! The road was very lonely, for we saw neither house, man, nor beast for several miles. Mr. James, obeying a true instinct, insisted at last on turning off across country, and keeping due north by the friendly light of the stars. So we trudged along awfully tired, pressing through thick jungle damp with dew, blistering our feet on the clods of newly ploughed fields, and stealing like ghosts through villages wrapped in sleep. Once or twice we stood still to listen and strained our ears to catch the footfall of prowling beasts. Leopards lurk in the neighbourhood, and carry off an occasional cow. This reflection was a little exciting, as we had nothing but a small cane with which to defend ourselves in case of attack. It was half-past nine when we struck into the broad pucca road, and another hour before we reached the Toll Collector's Bungalow at "Soorooopgunge," overlooking the river,—and welcomed the sight of our lighted boat.

* A place miles out of our course. *Vide Map.*

The following day (Friday, Dec. 23rd) we rowed down to Culnah again, and preached in the bazar as before. To help on the sale of Scriptures, we planted an iron table loaded with books at a place where three ways met, but no one would buy, and a general feeling of contempt for us expressed itself pretty clearly as we went from shop to shop hawking our wares. It was not pleasant. We thought of the Master's injunction—

"Whosoever shall not receive you
Nor hear your words,
When ye depart out of that house or city,—
Shake off the dust of your feet,"

and felt inclined to obey it. Just then we fell in with Babu Goshto Behari Mukkar, a missionary of the Free Church, stationed here, and at once

"A change came o'er the spirit of our dream."

He is a genial man, of more than ordinary intelligence, with some little skill in versification, and a broad vein of pleasant humour. He interested us greatly; and suggested that if we would come back to Culna and give a Lecture in English on Sunday afternoon (Christmas day), we might meet with a better reception, and do much good. To this we readily agreed, Goshto Babu undertaking to announce the Lecture and make all preliminary arrangements. Thus we parted, to meet again on Christmas day. Late the same evening we anchored off

Santiipoor

("City of Peace") a large compactly built town, some distance from the riverside. Next morning, we commenced preaching at several points, each working in a separate locality and patiently sowing the good seed of the Kingdom. I

perambulated the suburbs, sitting down in many a house, and easily finding the footprints of sorrow even in Santipoor. Scripture portions sold more readily here than at Culna, but one incident distressed me exceedingly. I had been chatting in a goldsmith's shop, and was about to leave. The man had spoken courteously, and thanked me for the word sketch I had given him of the Life of Christ. It was an opportunity not to be lost. I pressed him to purchase one of the Bible books. Smilingly he consented, took two yellow bound copies of St. Luke's Gospel, and at once gave them to his infant children to play with. One baby sucked her possession to pulp, and the other tore his to scraps before my eyes. There was something comical in the sight, but I turned away with a feeling akin to disgust. Should we go on casting pearls before swine? was this cheap selling of the Gospels any good? I remained alone in the boat that afternoon when the others went to preach. I said I must have time to prepare my Lecture for the following day. The truth was I felt ill at ease with our method of work. We talked long and earnestly about it after dinner. We agreed, one and all, that our present methods of preaching seemed singularly futile and weak, calculated to move only a unit here and there among the mixed crowds of the bazar, and leaving the larger mass of the people unassailed. We longed for some means of making more general stir, and stamping a deeper impression. Yet how alter our tactics? how discover the more excellent way? We had not to wait long for an indication of one method at least, ready to our hand, which proved very successful, and might, I venture to think, be more often employed. This was the use of English as a medium of communication with the more educated class. The number of those who can read and speak our language multiplies rapidly every day. 17.799

THE LECTURE AT CULNA.'

Christmas Day.

We returned to Culnah early next morning, and Mr. James conducted a devotional service in Goshto Babu's house. The Lecture was to be at 4 o'clock in the afternoon. Invitations had been sent to all the leading men of the town, and a large gathering was expected, as on Sunday the Government offices, court houses &c. are all closed. Goshto Babu and Bhagabati spent the midday hours in final preparation for the event of the day. Facing the "Rajbari" gates in the very heart of the town there are two pucca markets, built in the centre of a large open square, and roofed with corrugated iron. One of these had been kindly lent by the Maharajah's steward for the purpose of the meeting. Open on all sides, oblong in form, and furnished with a table, chairs and mats, this market-shed made a first rate public hall. At the hour appointed we took our places and began to sing; the people flocking in from all sides. Mr. James then delivered a Bengali address, during which the Magistrate (a Brahmin) drove up, and entered the hall followed by a host of students. A special mat near the front had been reserved for their use. We counted 400 faces in the audience: and all listened throughout with the greatest attention and respect. I spoke in English for about an hour on

"The Book, The Person and The Gospel of Jesus Christ,"

after which the Magistrate rose and expressed himself as exceedingly pleased with the lecture, at the same time openly avowing his great admiration for the character of Christ. He was seconded by a Pleader, who subsequently stepped up to the table and bought a copy of the English Bible with

gilt edges, and tastefully bound in calf. The students vented their satisfaction after the English manner, by a loud clapping of hands; and those who had formed the outer ring of the audience, the two or three hundred who knew no English, were overheard by Bhagabati, eagerly asking what the Lecture had been about. The Magistrate accompanied us part of the way back to our boat, and expressed a strong desire that we should visit Culnah again. We ourselves were gratified not a little. We had stirred up the whole town from the Government official to the smallest school-boy, our message had been listened to with great respect, and had aroused some responsive avowal of faith and love. All this, too, in the very place where we had met with such indifference two days before. "Perfect!" said Mr. James as soon as we got away, "a perfect success." The leaders of the Brahmo Somaj way-laid us on our return, and said with much courtesy, "We have been very pleased with your visit to-day." Goshto Babu, whose anxiety had been great as the hour for the meeting drew near, was proportionately elated when he saw how large an audience mustered to hear us. He is a faithful man in love with his work. It is no wonder that his influence tells. Before leaving he introduced us to a class of young men, engaged in farm labour, whom he teaches for an hour every evening, to read and write. We weighed anchor just after dark, and glided down with the tide beyond Santipoor. All next day we were scudding along under a broad stretch of canvass, in company with quite a fleet of native boats, "broad-bellied with bulging brown sails." They were mostly loaded with sand and vegetable produce for the Calcutta market. On Tuesday morning Bhagabati, Dino and I landed at

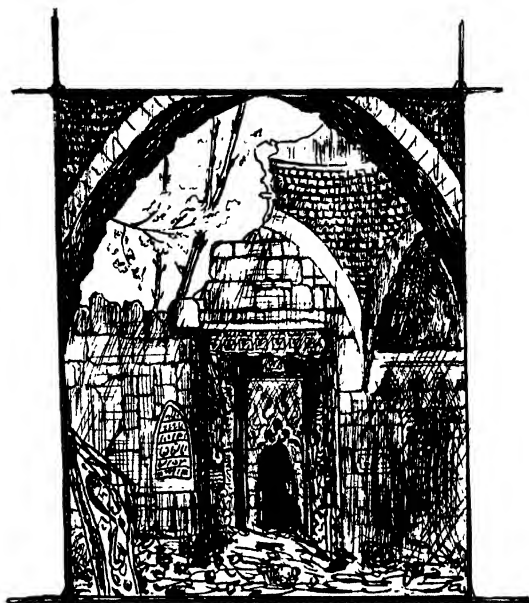
Trebeni Ghat

to explore the valley of the "Saraswati," once a great river bearing proudly the ships of many lands: now "silent and dead,—stretching for miles through the country as a green broad hollow with a tidal ditch which you can jump across in the dry season. A few miles inland on the edge of this grassy basin flourished "Satgaon" the Royal Port of Bengal from a prehistoric age to the time of the Portuguese. Trebeni was a very ancient place of pilgrimage, and is still regarded as sacred ground. Pliny and Ptolemy both mention it. In their day it was a centre of considerable trade. South of the present village stands a famous mosque, built in A. D. 1298. It was once a Hindu Temple.

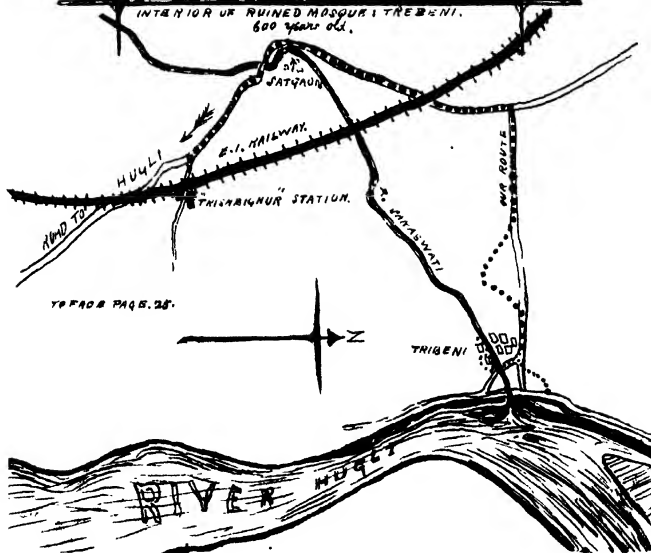
Satgaon, Ancient and Modern.

Satgaon was formerly the residence of kings, and is said to have been a city of immense size so as to have swallowed one hundred villages. Its decay was due to the silting up of the Saraswati river, which began in the 16th century.

The great stream of the Ganges once flowed southwards from Satgaon by way of the Saraswati into the Hugli trough. Nothing remains to indicate the former grandeur of the place except a ruined mosque. It is now a miserable village of eleven huts. Some years ago the floods washed out from deep underground the timbers of a sea-going ship. We stood for a long while on the site of the ancient city:—a tumbled, uneven mass of land covered with great heaps of broken bricks, and overgrown with grass and bramble. A troop of monkeys watched us with keen eyes and leapt to and fro across the "tidal ditch" in easy bounds. The mosque lies close to the Grand Trunk Road, but so surrounded with loose jungle that we should never



INTERIOR OF RUINED MOSQUE TREBENI.
600 years old.



YFAD 8 PAGE 28.

have discovered it without a guide. It is a small building of chused brick, roofless, and choked up with rubbish. I said to an old man sitting by "Who built this mosque?" "Sir," he replied gravely, "No one built it,—it grew of itself." Philosophers of a certain school, who see in this universe only a "fortuitous concourse of atoms," would have loved that man, and made a graceful picture of him as he sat there under the palm trees, and called him "The Sage of Asia," poor gullible old Indian though he was! I drew his attention to a gang of workmen erecting a wall near the road, and softly insinuated, as a mere hypothesis, that similar human hands might have raised up the old ruin beside us;—but the sage only smiled sadly at my unaccountable ignorance, and shook his head. From Satgaon we walked to "Trishbighur" Station, but finding no train due for at least an hour, we drove down to Hugli in a ticca gari, and rejoined the budgerow there.

Discussion with students of the Hugli College.

A large college, founded in 1836, flourishes at Hugli. It was built and endowed with a portion of the money which accumulated on the estate of Mahammad Mohsin, when the settlement of his affairs fell into the hands of the Government. It is devoted to the purpose of high class English education;—a smaller building, which adjoins it, being used as a "collegiate school," or place of preliminary training for those who may afterwards enter the college itself. On the afternoon of our arrival, as we preached in the town, several students swerved from their homeward paths to join the outskirts of the crowd which had gathered to hear us. Some of them afterwards followed us into the boat, and engaged in

discussion with us for several hours. To write a detailed account of these discussions would fill a volume. But it may interest some who will read this pamphlet to know what kind of *questions* are most frequently proposed by such enquirers when they seek the missionary's help, or oppose his preaching of the Gospel of Christ.

The first is sure to be somewhat as follows :—

“ Why should I believe in Jesus Christ ? God has given many religions to the world, as there are many roads which lead to the same city. All religions aim at God, all are therefore alike good. Christianity is yours, it is good for you, not for us. We all mean the same thing under different names. We say Krishna, you say Christ. You have the Bible, we have the Vedas, Musulmans have the Quran. Let each race keep its own.”

With regard to the first proposition, it is usually sufficient to answer in the words of Dr. Wilson, that “ *as God is the Father of all mankind, He cannot have appointed opposing laws for the regulation of His family.*” And to meet the remaining objections, it will readily be seen, that a large number of very varied replies suggest themselves. As for instance—

“ *We admit that all religions aim at God, but it does not follow that all are therefore alike good.* Many sepoys may aim at a target, yet only one manage to hit it. I may mean to travel to Delhi, but if by mistake I enter the train for Calcutta, every mile will add to the distance which separates Delhi from me. A little child lost in the streets, may be breaking his heart with desire to find the way home, and yet every moment be straying farther away. But the child's elder brother finds him, and takes his hand, and leads him safely through the crowded city, and brings him back. Jesus

Christ came to seek and to save the lost. By ourselves we cannot get home, we cannot know God. We may feel very sad, and shed many tears over our sin, yet go on sinning still, unforgiven. The step may be erring, while the aim is true. God rewards our sincere search after Him by a revelation of the true way in Jesus Christ. It is ours to walk in that way."

Or again:—"A book that claims to have come from God, must be true in all its statements, free from contradictions of principle, and holy in its tendency." Judged by this test, neither the Vedas, nor the Kuran can substantiate the claim. Compare these with the Bible, and your own reason will decide in favour of the Christian Scriptures. A man may think He possesses the goodliest pearl in the world,—he may have been taught to believe so, and be happy in that belief. But if a stranger, looking upon it, should say, "My friend you are wrong: your pearl is dim and poor beside another which I can show you. Here in this casquet behold a better, a priceless gem!" he will have no rest until he has laid his own side by side with the other, and judged between them. No blind prejudice or clinging to the old can avail aught, should the new really be better. The pearl of great price will reveal its own worth when once it is fairly examined. In the same manner you have been taught to believe that your sacred books are the oracles of God, yet they are full of foolish stories, and wrong principles, and unholy teaching. Produce them: re-examine them:—compare them with the Bible, and you will surely renounce them. As for Krishna, the deeds recorded of him are such that if you should copy him and do the like, you would be cast into prison, and shunned by all your friends." "But," they answer, "Krishna was God. He could do what He pleased.

What is sin in us is not sin in God. He frames certain laws for his creatures, which they must obey, but he himself remains free. Who dare question his deeds ?”

The sophistry which lurks in this question will be more apparent if we take another built on the same contradiction of terms.

“*Is not God almighty ?*” said a student to Mr. James.

“Certainly.”

“*Then cannot He make another God like Himself ?*”

“By no means” was Mr. James’s reply. “You first predicate of God that He is almighty, and then require me to conceive of another God equally mighty. There can only be *one* Being *all*-mighty. God cannot reconcile contradictories. Your question is foolish. Can God make a triangle with only two sides, or a valley without hills ?”

The more enlightened among the students repudiate the charge of idol worship. They usually argue thus :—

“Is not God everywhere present ?”

“Yes.”

“Then if God be everywhere present He is in the particles of this stone, in the drops of this stream, in the sap of this tree. There exists nothing outside of God. When therefore I bow before the stone, or worship the tree, or bathe religiously in the stream, it is not the *thing*, but God *in* the thing whom I really adore.”

We answer, “*How is it then that you worship particular stones, and special trees, and only certain streams ?* Do you not say yourselves, that the Ganges is more sacred than any other river ? Yet God is everywhere present, He is not in one locality more than another ; no tree, no stream is sacred above the rest. *And is it not true that the common people are taught to believe in the thing itself as God ?* Intellectually

God is an idea which possesses our minds. Time and space cannot limit Him. If we take any tangible thing as the representative of an idea, sooner or later we cease to regard it as the embodiment of the idea, we lose the idea, we have only the thing left, denuded of the meaning for which it stood. This is the penalty of all idol worship and ritualistic mummary; from which no Idolator, no Ritualist is ever free. The idea of God, in which we sum up all our highest conceptions as the Almighty, Omnipresent, Infinitely Holy, All-merciful and All-loving; this idea cannot be localized, cannot be narrowed to a place, or a thing. It will vanish away and leave us only the material object to call our God. We cannot keep the thing and yet retain the idea."

A serious difficulty arises in dealing with such enquirers, from their utter ignorance of the meaning and value of historical evidence. Here is an instance. I had chanced to compare the historical Christ with the heroes of Homeric song, and Hindu mythology. "It is no more certain," I remarked in conclusion, "that 'Ram' did the exploits recorded of him, than that Hercules actually performed the labours for which he is famed. Both alike are the creations of the poet's brain."

"What!" exclaimed the astonished student, "Do you tell me that Homer was no historian, that the twelve labours of Hercules are mythical legends! what then can I now believe?"

Sometimes a student will rush into your cabin, seat himself emphatically on a chair, and say abruptly:—

"Prove to me that Jesus Christ was the Son of God."

It is well to meet such a demand at first on the common ground of Christ's *humanity* and so make the questioner answer himself, *e. g.*, "Look at Jesus Christ as a man.

He stands alone. His character is unique. There is none like Him. He does things which no man can do. Who then is He? Let us ask Him. This is His answer:—"I proceeded forth and came from God." "Say ye of Him whom the Father hath sanctified, and sent into the world, Thou blasphemest; because I said, I am the Son of God? If I do not the works of my Father, believe me not." 17.799

These are fair samples of the difficulties raised by the more intelligent of those who came to discuss with us. They are samples only, and as I have said, samples of the better sort. It would be a wearisome task to write down specimen questions of other kinds, even though many such were put to us in all good faith, and revealed curious subtleties of metaphysical reasoning. We have sometimes to out-argue argument, running it down along very crooked and illogical lines. At other times to cope with broad sweeping assertions, accepted as Gospel by those who hear them, and utterly impossible to falsify because based on the credibility of the speakers themselves. Analogy also is very generally resorted to in the stead of argument, and received as equally valid.

I think more use might be made of the admissions of such men as Rajah Ram Mohun Roy, whose name is much honoured amongst the people, and whose Book on "The Precepts of Jesus" we found very helpful in dealing with the Hugli students. It was very delightful work, talking with these men, even though some of them after hours of patient and painstaking discussion, went away unconvinced. One however, "Sidheswar Palit" by name, thanked us warmly and said with much candour as he rose to leave—

"I am overwhelmed by your logic."



RAJAN RAM MOHUN ROY
TO FACE PAGE 30
DIED AT BRISTOL. 1898.

We invited him very earnestly to attend a Lecture to be held the following day in the

Free Church Institution, Chinsurah.

Mr. James had made all necessary arrangements with the Rev. Kodarnath Dey, the Principal in charge. Chinsurah is an old Dutch Settlement, about a mile below Hugli. It now forms a portion of the latter town. We walked down in the afternoon, and were received very kindly by Mr. Dey, who is an elderly man, with a physiognomy not unlike that of Count Bismarck. There are 450 boys in the school under his care. He expressed his regret that they had all gone home for their Christmas vacation. He would like them to have heard the Lecture. He was much afraid there would be but a poor attendance at so short a notice. He hoped we would visit Chinsurah again on some more convenient occasion. The meeting was held in one of the class-rooms downstairs, and some thirty students mustered for it, among them Sidheswar Palit. Mr. James and I both gave addresses in English, which were intently listened to throughout. The proceedings closed with a vote of thanks, moved by Mr. Dey and seconded by one of his staff. A pleasant cup of tea awaited us in the room above, after which we set off for the walk back to Hugli, accompanied part of the way by our kind-hearted host.

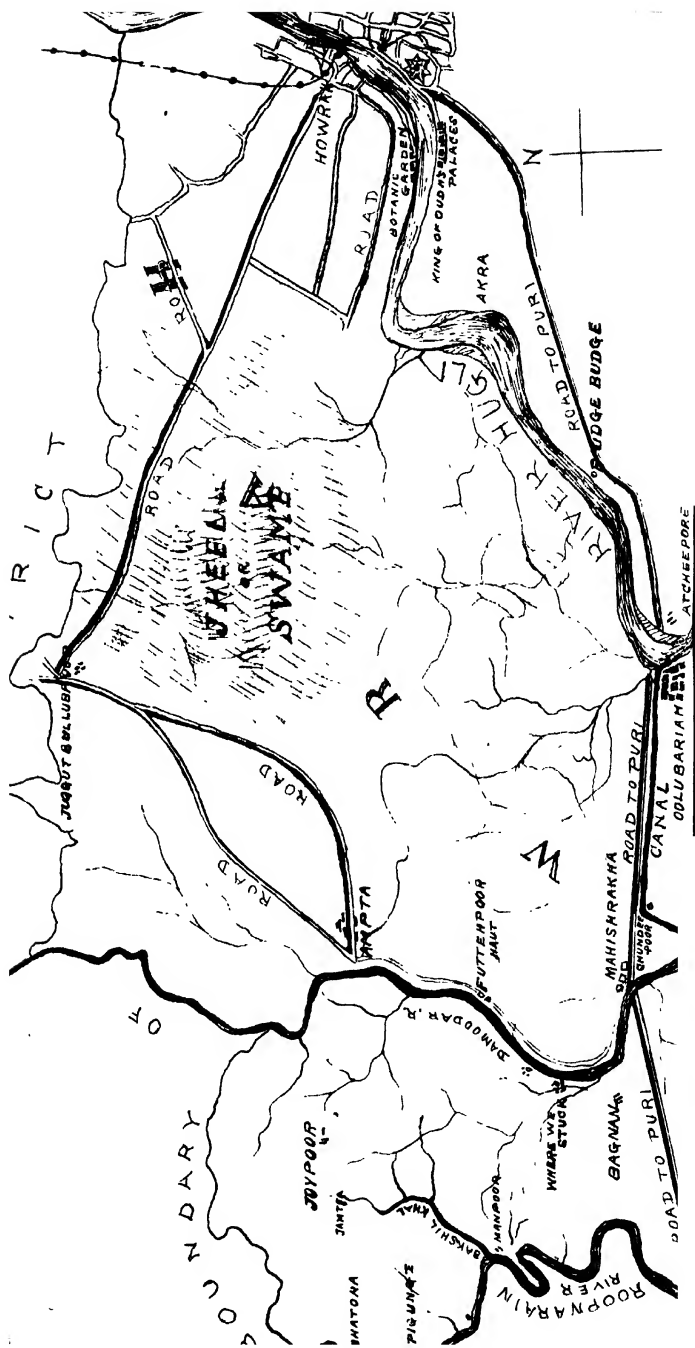
Next morning we preached again in the Hugli Bazaar: and at noon weighed anchor, sailing down river and arriving at

Chandernagore

about 3 o'clock. It is necessary to get a 'permit' from the "Chef De Service" in order to preach in the streets of

any French town. That everything might be done 'decently and in order,' Bhagabati and I waited on the Governor immediately upon our arrival. His private secretary received us with typical French politeness, and we proceeded to state our request. But Monsieur Le Secrétaire knew not a word of English, and I was equally ignorant of his volatile French. The result was that a Bengali Babu had to act as interpreter for us! What the Frenchman thought of it I can't say, but I felt that our position was rather ridiculous, and not a little embarrassing. However we got our permit. The Governor had expressed himself in sympathy with our desire to preach to the heathen, and very willing to stretch his prerogative a little, and allow us *for that day only* to speak in the public street, contrary to French Regulations. He had also intimated that we might hold any number of meetings, at any time, in the town, by the simple expedient of hiring a hall or room.

We made the most of the favour granted us, by addressing large crowds that evening at several corners of the Bazaar, and selling a goodly number of Scripture portions; after which Mr. James conducted a short service in the house of a Protestant lady, with whom we were delighted to meet a little band of lonely but warm-hearted disciples, who find it a struggle to keep their religious freedom in this centre of Roman Catholic influence. From Chandernagore I returned to Howrah by train, and thus ended our fortnight's trip up the river.



THE DISTRICT OF HOWRAH.

Area and Population.

“Howrah district forms a triangular area in the south of the Hugli district. It is bounded on the north by an arbitrary line, running in a westerly direction from the mouth of the Bali Khal to the Damoodar river; thence for eight miles up that river; and thence again west to the Roopnarain. On the east, the boundary is the river Hugli;—on the south and west, the Roopnarain.”

The district rests snugly in the fork between these two branches of water; while a third river, the Damoodar, runs down the middle. The land lies low, and much of it is little better than a swamp during most of the year. Yet it is speckled all over with villages and country towns, of which there were no less than 1426 in 1872, with a population of 731,057 souls.

Facilities for work.

During the rainy months almost every part of the district can be reached by water. Numberless khals intersect the land, and are navigable by the smaller sort of native boats. A splendid high level canal, 36 feet wide, and 9 feet deep, crosses from Oolubariah on the Hugli, to the Damoodar river, a length of eight miles;—with a further cutting of four miles from the Damoodar to the Roopnarain.

The Damoodar, in the dry season, is practically useless, as a navigable channel, north of this Canal. Moreover, then, nearly all the khals become mere muddy ditches, or tortuous lines of slush. Through these the villagers paddle their primitive canoes, which are simply hollowed-out trunks of the Palm tree; with a nicety of balance and management

only acquired by constant practice from babyhood upward. Even then accidents sometimes happen ;—and the long rolling log heels over, precipitating its burden of cabbages, rice, earthen pots, black oil bottles, and timid women into the unctuous slime. Steamers ply daily throughout the year between Calcutta and Gopigunge ; coasting round the district, and touching at Oolubariah, Gaonkhali, and Tumlook.

The rivers are protected on both sides by raised banks or “bunds,” which also serve the purpose of roads. Apart from these there is hardly a road of any description beyond the boundaries of the town of Howrah. In the interior, one has to pick one’s way from village to village along the ridges of the rice fields, or the tiny tracks of soft mud which naked feet have welded into clay.

The District has one Subdivision,—that of Oolubariah ;—at which station a Magisterial Court is held every day. There are several minor Subdivisions as Police Circles, with a “Thannah” or Police Station in the principal town of each. The “haut” or market is a universal institution, held in some places twice a week, in others only once. These are the centres of trade and social influence, since they are thronged with people from the neighbouring villages to a distance of several miles. It is obvious that a Missionary seeking to spread his message and scatter his books as widely as possible, will think much of these hauts, and take every available opportunity of visiting those within reach during his annual tour.

DOWN RIVER.

Altered Arrangements.

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plan of the expedition before starting afresh. Our preaching staff was now reduced to three; Mr. James being claimed by his classes at Serampore and Jibon having also returned to College. But on this next journey, to last for a month, my wife had arranged to accompany me; and consequently preparations of a more careful kind than were needed before, became essential to the comfort of our floating home.

In the *first* place, a second boat was required. Hitherto five of us had been quartered in the budgerow, and managed well enough as a bachelor party, not over fastidious in the matter of elbow room and sundry *et ceteras*. With a lady to provide for, however, and a lady's belongings, the case was different. So we chartered a smaller boat called a "Pansi," for our native brethren,—and arranged the interior of the budgerow for our own exclusive use.

In the *second* place fresh stores had to be laid in, sufficient to last for a whole month. And in the *third* place, it was necessary to secure pulpit supplies for Howrah during my absence, and make a careful inventory of household possessions to be left in charge of the servants until our return. When these preparations had all been completed, we embarked on the evening of Thursday, January 5th, and quietly slid away down stream on the bosom of the silent river.

A Peep into the Boat.

Our lighted cabin looked very cozy and pleasant, as we entered it that evening, and the sensation of indoor light and warmth was heightened by contrast with the darkness outside, and the damp murky air, which hung over the river, and rendered every thing exposed to it wet and clammy to the touch. Whilst I have said that the cabin looked cozy and pleasant, it must not be inferred that there were in it any of

those luxurious fittings and fancies which are so delightful,—and so commonly associated with the words “cabin” and “saloon.” Here were no gilded panels, and polished carvings and velvet-cushioned sofas, grateful to eye and limb:—no magnificent mirrors,—reflecting the lustre of golden lamps, and the soft radiance of rich colour in carpet and curtain and dark-stained woods: no lovely paintings, or chaste portraits to greet one with homely memories of familiar faces and familiar scenes. None of these things would have met your eye had you stepped on board the budgerow, and paused a moment at the open door of “The Saloon” that cold January night. A small room,—not wide enough to swing your cane in,—just high enough to stand upright in,—with a floor of bare boards, loose, creaky, and sodden with many stains. Windows along the sides; not *glass* windows,—but wooden frames, each about two feet square, and fitted with dingy green “flaps,” to open and shut,—like miniature venetian blinds. Opposite the doorway, a wooden partition from ceiling to floor, with an open space down the middle, screened by a light purdah of brown creton. On the left of this space a small wardrobe called an “almirah;” on the right, my study table, furnished with books, writing materials, a medicine chest and lighted lamp. In the foreground, a small camp table for meals &c. with two or three cane chairs, and several boxes of Bengali books. Such was our cabin. Suddenly a great crash on one side and the clattering of gari wheels overhead, made us aware that we were passing under the Howrah Bridge, and had struck against one of the iron pontoons upon which it rests. The river-stream, aided by the ebb current flows with great force through the openings between the pontoons; and the passage of a lumbering boat, so un-

manageable as ours, is always attended with more or less risk of collision. The damage done was slight, though the shock was severe. The noise of traffic grew fainter and at last ceased altogether, as the river bore us on, farther and farther away, through the smoky mist. We anchored at Garden Reach, just under the walls of the beautiful palace of the late ex-King of Oude.

●

Daybreak on the River.

Next morning, Friday, January 6th, we were early astir in consequence of the noisy and excited behaviour of a large steamer, which had lain-to all night in midstream, and was now signalling her departure seawards by churning the river with her paddles in a very fussy and obtrusive style.

Ping! Ping! went the bell, the engine throbbed, and the great wheels flashed round,—tossing out tons of foam with as much ease and celerity as the hairdresser's machine-brush separates the light clippings of the shears from our remaining locks!

Ping! Ping! again, a dead lull for a second or two, and then another vigorous onslaught of plunging wheels, in reverse movement. A solitary passenger here and there, well muffled up, appeared on the deck—Officers shouted,—khalassies* leapt round the windlass like a gang of monkeys, and presently, ere the sun had time to get up and wish the ship 'good-morning'—away she went down the broad flowing river, followed by rollicking waves that set off in mad companies to wreak their boisterous fun on the boats near the shore. They led our stolid old barge a lively dance, heaving us up and bobbing us down again, driving us hither and thither, squirting spray through the windows, and bumping us against

* Native sailors.

the palace embankment in a very rough good-humoured fashion, which threatened to damage our ribs. We sheered off as soon as we could.

This embankment, built of brick and covered with Portland cement, slopes down to the water from the long line of gardens and palaces purchased by Government for the residence of



Wajid Ali Shah,

late ex-King of Oude. These picturesque buildings have for many years been one of the sights of Calcutta: bright flags streaming from painted gables, beautiful surrounding shrubberies, and myriads of flying pigeons. Here lived the aged king till his death at 2 A. M. on Wednesday, September 21st, last year. He was allowed to retain his royal title, and enjoyed a yearly income of twelve lakhs of rupees. But a princely annuity is hardly sufficient compensation for the loss of a kingdom. The title ceased absolutely at his death, and his numerous wives and dependants were speedily induced to take sums of money in satisfaction of their claims, and disappear. A large collection of birds, beasts and reptiles found on the premises fell under the hammer; and the palace is now deserted and empty, awaiting probable division into separate lots and purchase by public auction.

The story of the king's life is a strange one. He ascended the throne of Oude in 1847. Five years later he was described in the Report of the British Resident at his court in Lucknow, as a "crazy imbecile," surrounded exclusively by knavish favourites, "eunuchs, fiddlers, and poetasters," by whom he was swayed, for their private interests, to the serious detriment of his suffering subjects. It cannot be doubted that the king was unfit to reign,—he is known to

have wandered about the streets of his capital, childishly beating a drum, in a state of jovial inebriation. Finally, on the ground of gross misrule, unimproved after "friendly and timely warning:"—the king was dethroned, and his territories were annexed by the Indian Government under Lord Dalhousie in 1856. This act violated the well-known treaty of 1837, which though never ratified by the Secret Committee in England, was referred to as valid more than ~~once~~ by the Indian Council, when dealing with the king of Oude, and accepted by him in all good faith, the fact of its abortion being concealed from him up to the very last. By the terms of this treaty Lord Dalhousie acquired indeed "a right to seize the Government, but only for a temporary object," and the same treaty "bound him to maintain the Native Institutions and forms of administration, so as to facilitate the restoration of those territories to the Sovereign."*

W. H. Russell, Esq., LL. D., Special Correspondent of the "*Times*," in his book, "*My Diary in India*" thus writes under date *February 27th*, 1858:—"It was in the Crimea I first heard of the annexation of Oude, which was represented not only as an act of the highest political wisdom, but also as a political necessity. Now, near the spot, I hear wise men doubt the wisdom,—and see them shake their heads when one talks of the necessity,—of the annexation. The ex-king, who is in captivity in Calcutta,† has acted with a firmness which one

* Torrens. *Empire of Asia*, page 389.

† The king was dethroned in February, 1856. He left Lucknow on March 13th, and came down to Calcutta, with the intention to proceed to England and appeal to the Queen. Subsequently his mother, brother, and son went in his stead; the two former dying in Europe. In consequence of well-grounded suspicion of complicity in the mutiny, the king was arrested on June 15th, 1857, and lodged as a State Prisoner in Fort William.

could not have expected from a mere sensualist, as he was said to be, half idiotic, and entirely base. I am told that his conduct at the time of the annexation astonished our officers : that it was characterized by dignity and propriety. Up to the present moment, he has neither consented to his deposition, nor taken one farthing of the annuity which the Company settled on him.

The menagerie of the king of Oude, as much his private property as his watch, or turban, were sold (about a fortnight after the annexation), and his jewels seized and impounded, though we had no more claim on them than on the Crown diamonds of Russia."

In October 1859, he accepted the offer of twelve lakhs as a life annuity, with the retention of his title ; and the Palace at Garden Reach as a residence. There he established a new menagerie, on an extensive scale, the snakes alone numbering some hundreds of all kinds. He also preserved several tanks of fish, which were so tame, that they would swim to the sides and eat from one's hand. The king was indulgent towards the little colony of retainers that gathered about his palace walls, he founded a free school, and built a small Imambarree ; — in which his corpse was laid, the night after death, wrapped in a shroud from Bagdad. He was 68 years of age, and the last Mahomedan Ruler in India.

With the Ebb tide.

We followed in the wake of that early vessel down-river, and were overtaken by many others in the course of the morning. Great ocean Steamers like floating castles, towering above us in dark massive strength :—"Stalwart Tugs" carrying off their big ships as ants run away with a grain of corn ;" and hosts of native vessels, large and small, rolling and pitching

like ourselves in the billowy commotion. The banks of the river for several miles are studded with thriving factories, compact little towns, dockyards, brick fields, and suburban villas. Here and there dense masses of shipping:—an iron bridge crossing the mouth of some khal:—or a cluster of village huts amid clumps of palm and bamboo, in striking contrast with the Hindoo temple, “heavy-domed, squat, and ungraceful.” Just below Garden Reach once stood the Fort of Aligarh, and opposite to it, on the other bank of the river, the Fort of Tanna, both of which were taken by Lord Clive in the re-capture of Calcutta on the 30th December 1756. In the vicinity is the present southern boundary of the Calcutta Port, which extends for ten miles along the Hugli, with a width of working channel which averages 250 yards. There are moorings within the Port limits for 169 vessels. The position of the city has been considered so precarious, owing to a possible silting up of the Hugli, that operations on the condition of the river are taken almost hourly, and gigantic dredges are continually at work. We drifted slowly down with the tide, past Akra, and Budge-Budge, till noon;—when we reached

Oolubariah

and dropped anchor in the khal near the entrance Lock of the high level canal. Here we posted some letters, and without further delay, swung round into the Lock. The heavy gates closed behind us, and hemmed us in between deep brick walls like the shaft of a mine, while the noon-day sun struck down on our heads, and the heat was stifling! Then began the rush of strong currents into the Lock, slowly lifting its weight of boats, inch by inch, up the heated sides of the walls. The Lock is in charge of Babus, who levy the Govern-

ment Toll. Dozens of little craft pass through every day, and afford fine opportunities for the exercise of officialism in its more disagreeable forms. We heard many complaints of scant ceremony shewn to the poorer boatmen. Even Bhagabati and Dino had the gates shut against them, on a later occasion when travelling alone, and were kept waiting for several hours. Of course, the appearance of a Saheb produces polite alacrity; although the poor "Padre," proverbially unresentful, may be sometimes delayed. We got to the level of the canal at last, and once more were able to breathe fresh blowing air. Our boat was measured inside and out, and its dimensions having been registered, we paid the toll, received in exchange a Government Pass, and were immediately towed way. High banks on either side confine the clear water, and form narrow but excellent roads. The surrounding country lies low and flat,—and is for the most part a wide-reaching swamp for the cultivation of rice:—drained by deep cuttings, and irrigated by water let off from the canal through a series of sluice gates and distributive channels. It will be remembered that the rice crop requires for its nourishment a constant depth of several inches of water above the soil.

Dim lines of trees, with wide gaps between, skirt the edge of the plain;—and one or two small hamlets marked by clusters of palms dot the foreground. Little groups of huts cling to the outer sides of the canal embankment, at short distances apart, inhabited by peasants of the poorest and most illiterate type. I could not find a single person amongst them who was able either to read or write. Many of them ran away and hid behind the trees, when they saw me approach.

As the sun was setting we passed the large village of

Chundeeppoor, divided in two by the canal. On the right was a big effigy of some military officer, twice the size of life, with Irish face, red hair, and staring blue eyes. The statue was apparently modelled of mud, though it may have been stuffed with straw. It was painted with a brilliant red jacket, and blue trousers, in a very imposing attitude:—the right leg thrown forward, the head drawn back. I could not discover whether or no it was regarded as an idol. The eyes had a terrible look, in the dying light of the sun. On the opposite bank stood a group of smaller straw figures, smeared with mud, and rotting away. From Chundeeppoor the canal swerves off to the left, and enters the Damoodar river at Bansberia through the gates of a second Lock. We anchored outside the Lock that evening, ready to start again at dawn the following day.

Up the Damoodar—Stuck on a Sandbank.

Our object was to get as far up this shallow river as possible, while yet there was depth enough of water to carry us along. The bed was drying up fast every day with the incoming of the cold season. We were very anxious to reach “Ampta,” the centre of a large population in the north of the District. But it was not to be. We set the rowers to work with the first streak of daylight, and piloted our way amid a mass of shoals, past Mahishrakha, till we could go no farther:—the boat grated through the sand and came to a dead stop on the west bank, about six miles above the canal.

Here we landed and visited a “Patshala,” or small school; perched on a bit of road near the river, and surrounded by a few huts which form the outpost of a large straggling village. I sang to the boys, told them the story of the Saviour, and gave each one a simple tract. They listened quietly, and

seemed very pleased, though far too shy to answer my questions. One or two afterwards bought copies of the Gospels.

Our native brethren, in the smaller boat, had been left to follow us from Howrah, as soon as their arrangements could be completed : and accordingly we thought it best to wait for them at this point ;—and endeavour to get to Ampta in their little skiff, when it should arrive, rather than abandon the project altogether.

After breakfast I crossed over to the other side of the river and started off to find a large *haut* held on Saturday and Tuesday at

Fultehpore.

A boatman accompanied me, carrying a basket of books. Our road lay along the embankment, crowded with men and women going to the market, and bearing loads of fruit, vegetables, rice &c. on their heads. We walked briskly onwards through long miles of dust,—exposed to the mid-day sun, and perspiring profusely. At length having reached the spot, we found ourselves suddenly in the thick of a hot, bustling, odoriferous throng. Along the road on one side was a row of shopkeepers' huts ; on the other side low down, a cleared space laid out in streets of small booths, stocked with all manner of merchandise : such as fish, grain, mats, pumpkins, earthen vessels, kerosine oil, glass bangles for the women, cocoanuts, sweets, and little penny mirrors. This space with its skeleton booths, remains unoccupied on days when no market is held. Some three or four hundred people were present that afternoon, amongst whom we pressed our way in and out, till the shelter of a large tree at the other end had been gained, when I made a stand and began operations by singing a Bengali hymn. For a time this novelty was the

centre of attraction, shopkeepers left their shops to come and listen. Then I preached, and sold Scriptures, and conversed at intervals, for a couple of hours, till further utterance became impossible owing to the strained condition of my throat, and the sore effect of swallowing large doses of dust. I sold altogether over 50 copies of the Gospels,—at one pice each. Then we walked back again along the embankment, and reached the budgerow just after dark. Our little dog “Lindsay” (a fox-terrier), came bounding over the wet sands to meet me, and two of the men carried me in their arms through a stretch of shallow water to the side of the boat.

Excursion to Bagnan.

Next morning (Sunday, January 8th,) it became clear that if we remained much longer at a spot so far up the rapidly drying river, we should be stranded indefinitely, and unable to get off the sands, or make good our retreat. So it was finally resolved to float away that morning at high tide, and drop anchor in the deeper waters a mile or two farther down. Leaving instructions with the manjee to bring on the boat, and meet us at “Mahishrakha,” my wife and I set off to walk thither, by way of Bagnan. This little town is the centre of a Police Circle,—and boasts a Government school, with a house or two of the pucca kind, (*i. e.*, made of brick instead of mud) and a daily bazar. The morning sun ‘flashed down our backs,’ and flashed up from the yellow fields of stubble through which we passed, with a glare that half blinded our eyes. No breeze,—no shelter,—and a long circuitous walk. I preached for half an hour in the bazar, and sold a few Gospels, about a dozen in all. Some of the shopkeepers ridiculed us in a very unsparing and contemptuous way.

But we sowed the good seed, and perhaps a grain or two here and there fell on 'good ground.' The Lord of the harvest alone knows. The great pilgrim road from Calcutta to the temple of Juggernath at Puri passes through Bagnan, and reaches the river Damoodar at Mahishrakha. It is a broad red road, kept in perfect repair by Government, and shaded on either side by young trees. Walking along, we presently observed a pretty bungalow and garden, on our left, owned by one "Hem Babu,"—a wealthy man of these parts. But the garden was disfigured by a pair of idolatrous statues, sculptured in stone, and set on pedestals as in Europe. When we reached Mahishrakha Ghat, there was no sign of the expected boat. So we sat down and waited. Some dingies,* with little sails about the size of cradle-quilts, came sweeping by with the current; and their occupants said they had passed the budgerow three miles up the river,—stuck fast at the very spot where we had left her! I will not describe our trudge backwards, those three weary miles. Words fail. The mere recollection is melancholy. Our strength distilled in salt drops that trickled fast down our faces, and dripped off our finger ends into the dust. My poor wife toiled on, almost faint with exhaustion, her feet swollen and blistered, her head racked with pain. It was 3 o'clock in the afternoon when we got to the boat. We had walked for five hours, in the sun, and without breakfast. Our men excused themselves on the ground that the flood tide had failed to bring up sufficient water to float off the Budgerow.—As for ourselves, the Sunday had scarcely been a day of rest. Late at night Bhagabati and Dino joined us in the smaller boat.

Description of a village school.

Our attempt to reach 'Ampta' the following day proved

* Native canoes.

abortive. The "Pánsi" (pronounced, Fáshee) drawing only a few inches of water, grounded on the sand, after going about a mile. So we got ashore, walked to some villages near, and visited the '*Patshala*' where we met with a kindly reception. To understand a Bengali patshala, it is necessary to lay aside all one's ideas of an English school. In the one, you have a room more or less awfully sombre, with little gothic windows high up near the ceiling, and large maps hanging down the walls, and rows of notched desks and hard benches on the floor, and the master's throne at the upper end wearing a dull, dusty, implacable look; in the other you have a small hut, open in front and raised from the ground like a theatre stage:—but on a mudden foundation, with mudden walls, and a mudden floor. If there are any pictures on the walls, they are pictures of idols, stuck on with rice paste. The only bit of furniture in the room is a small squat stool for the Guru himself. This hut is but one of several, which form his house; and circumvent a little yard of smooth cleanly-swept clay. All around, luxuriant vegetation:—fronded palms, feathery sheaves of bamboo or cane, broad blades of the cool plantain, and overspreading foliage of the stately and sacred Pépul. Hither come in the early morning troops of dark little boys, with oily heads, and sleek well-favoured stomachs. Each one has a small mat rolled up under his arm,—with a loose bundle of long strips of palm leaf, which he uses as copybook or slate. The surface of the leaf is smooth, so that ink easily flows over the outlines of large and elaborate Bengali letters; and is as readily washed off when a new copy has to be written. A sharpened bit of stick, like a stylus, and a dirty inkpot, complete the young student's equipment. The boys unroll their mats, spread them out in the courtyard, if it be not too sunny, or in the room if the

day be hot; and having greeted their guru with bobs and salaams, settle down cross-legged, each on his own bit of matting, each with his leafy slates beside him. Then the day's work begins, in a leisurely oriental fashion,—the guru sitting in the midst of his boys, and first getting all the gossip of their several homes. Presently the whole school, led by the foremost class, sets up a long wailing chant, which is sometimes musical and sometimes quite the reverse. This is the multiplication table. It is sung daily over and over again many times. The only feature common to both the English and Bengali schools is the use of the cane!

When we reached the patshala in question that Monday morning, the boys formed a bright circle in the courtyard, the early sun lighting up their fresh faces, and a delicious coolness pervading the air from the dew-laden foliage all around. The guru dusted his only chair for my reception, and the boys listened eagerly while I told them the Gospel story. They pleased me much by repeating all the main facts when I questioned them at the close. One or two got leave to run home for pice, and returned panting, to purchase some of our books.

We then walked back to the boat, and at noon made a desperate effort to get her off, but without success. There was some likelihood that the night tide would bring up a larger body of water, so Bhagabati and Dino went off in their own boat to preach at Mahishrakha, and await our arrival there the following day.

Midnight came with cold biting wind, and a fast upflowing tide. We stood on the deck of the budgerow, shivering, and listening to the gurgle of the current, and watching when to act. It was our last chance, and we knew it. The cumbersome rudder had been unhooked, and every drop of water baled out

of the boat, and the men stood in position, with long poles balanced, ready to strain every nerve when the right moment should come. It came at last. We felt a slight oscillation, the boat moved,—got loose from her prison of sand,—and after tremendous exertion went sliding down river—shaving the shoals all the way. An hour or two later we dropped anchor near the mouth of the canal.

Work at Oolubariah.

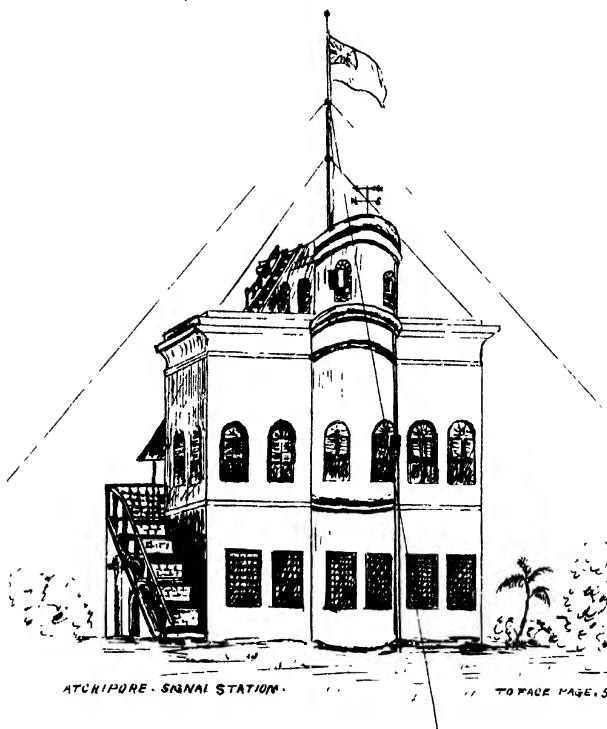
When the morning broke (Tuesday, January 10th,) we held a council of war, to decide upon our next line of march. The result was that we determined to work as thoroughly as possible the narrow strip of land, south of the canal, between the Hugli and Damoodar rivers. Bhagabati and Dino left us, and went off southwards with instructions to call at all the villages on the east bank of the Damoodar, and penetrate as far inland as they conveniently could. My wife and I planned to pass through the canal, and voyage slowly down the Hugli from Oolubariah, entering the strip from the other side, and so making sure that no important village would escape attention. I sold a few books as we passed through the Lock and afterwards made a long excursion from Chundee-pore through the villages thereabout. Half an hour was pleasantly spent in a patshala at Maheshpoor, where I taught and explained to the boys the Lord's Prayer. We got to Oolubariah at 2 o'clock in the afternoon, and from then till dark I was hard at work preaching in the bazar, and selling Scripture books. Twenty-five copies of the Gospels were thus disposed of and one large complete Bible. The shopkeepers waved me off, saying no one would *pay* for the books, but if I gave them away, all would take them and be glad to read them. I had heard that remark before. How-

ever, facts are the best arguments, and hence on my way back, I shewed these sceptical merchants a handful of money realized by the sale of the books, and they did not repeat their taunt. The pleaders and attorneys of the Magistrate's Court requested me to preach to them both in English and Bengali, which I gladly did. As the result they bought up all the remaining books I had in my hands. It was pleasant to meet a fellow labourer who is stationed here, a fine-looking patriarchal Babu, with long flowing beard, a missionary of the L. M. S. *

We were fortunate in getting fresh bread at Oolubariah. The bazar is a very large one, straggling for half a mile round the coast. English boots and shoes, in addition to the usual native commodities, can be purchased here. But milk is scarce, although a large cattle market is held once a week at which dozens of milch cows are regularly offered for sale. The old proverb holds:—'The farrier's horse and the shoe-maker's wife are worst shod.'

Atcheepore.

I had ordered some extra maps of the district to be sent from Calcutta to meet us at Oolubariah, but as yet they had not arrived. On this account, next morning, we crossed the river to Atcheepore, and telegraphed from the Signal Station to know if they had been despatched. This station is a pleasant two-storied house, commanding an extensive view of the river, both north and south. It stands on a broad bend of land, round which the stream sweeps with great force, cutting into the bank at Oolubariah on the opposite side. All vessels going up and down the river, signal here, and their names are wired to the Calcutta Press. We stood on the terrace, and looking through the telescope, read the names



ATCUPORE - SIGNAL STATION.

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of the Steamers "Loodiana" and "Chollerton," and the ship "Palgrave," tugged by the "Warren Hastings," all going seawards. I took a sketch of hazy Oolubariah from that high outlook, and one of the Telegraph Station itself, from the ground below. The work of the building is managed by Babu S. S. Ghose, who has lived here for 28 years. He received us with great courtesy, shewed us all the Signal books, flags, batteries &c., and pressed upon our acceptance a seer of delicious milk. In return I gave him an English Bible, with large type,—for which he was very thankful, promising to read it every day. We did not get a reply telegram till late that evening, after we had gone back to Oolubariah.

The event of the day at Oolubariah.

is the arrival and departure of the Calcutta steamboat. This boat plies twice daily, and usually brings a dense crowd of passengers, who debouch into the main bazar, and straightway fall a prey to smiling sellers of sweetmeats, curds, betel-nut, pan, and toddy.

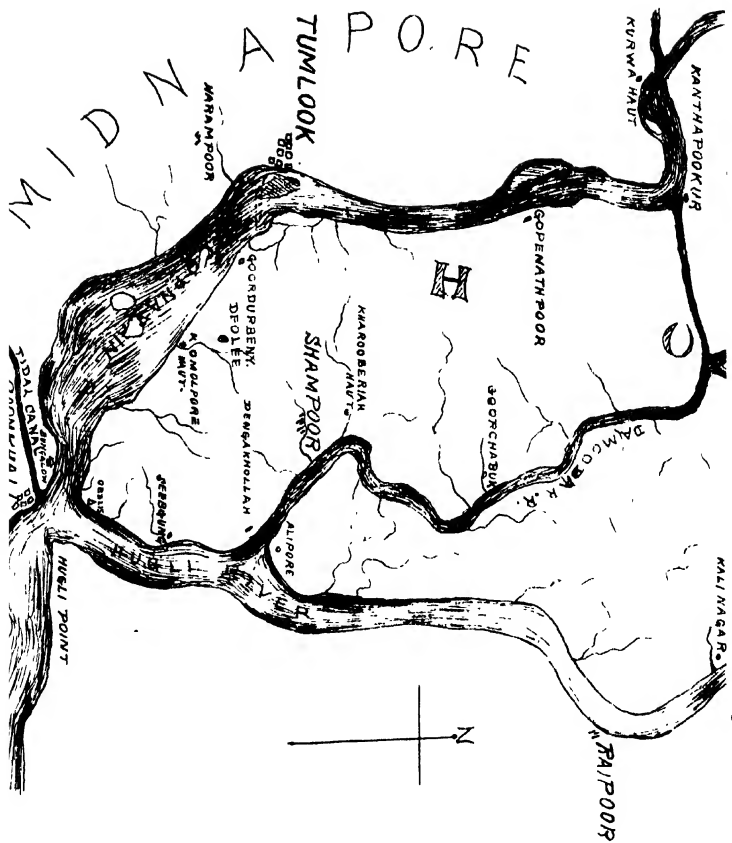
The excitement of landing is greatly enhanced by the excellent measures which the S. S. Company have taken to ensure the maximum amount of collision, scuffle, and confusion. A narrow bridge of planks runs down from the bazar street, and rests on the deck of an old barge, which does duty as a floating stage. To this latter the screechy little steamer,—after many gyrations and much letting off of steam,—is successfully moored. By well-timed arrangement,—the passengers going on board from the shore have already been admitted to the 'bridge,' or have taken it by assault. There they stand, choked up in the narrow passage, by which alone the disembarking mass can get to land. Then begins a lively

scene:—the one crowd pressing down, the other pressing up;—each bent on forcing back its opponent. Hookahs swing over a sea of heads, turbans get torn off,—brass lotahs flash up from the chaos,—coolies lurch through the living lane bearing unsteady bundles,—poor women suffer and sink down, only to be harshly dragged on again by their rightful lords;—and altogether there is such a hurly-burly,—such a scrambling, and screaming, and swearing as can well be imagined. It is therefore not to be wondered at that Her Majesty's mails lie quietly on the steamboat deck for half an hour or so after it arrives. The Oolubariah public do not seem to mind it; but I confess to a little impatience as I stood contemplating the scene of confusion from our budgerow roof, and chafing at the Postal delay. It was the morning after our visit to Atchepore. The coolie sent to fetch the bags at last shouldered 'his canvass load, and slowly wended his way to the Post Office, a quarter of a mile distant, stopping often to have a friendly chat, and a friendly pull at some shopkeeper's hookah. Arrived at the office, a pair of small shears was slowly produced, the bags were seized by the neck, their fastenings lazily cut, and their contents strewn out on the mud floor.

No maps! So we had to wait another day. Taking advantage of the ebb tide, we sailed down the river that afternoon to

Raipoor

a large village on the opposite bank. Here we found preparations in progress for a small mela, to begin the following day, with the usual groups of painted idols, life-size; and the never-to-be omitted 'Jattra' hall, or theatre tent, an erection of bamboo poles covered with an awning.



These melas have a very slight religious significance; the worship of the idols is soon over, the elements of fun and commerce largely predominate. Thousands of sweetmeat models of idols, temples, and animals, are sold at a pice each;—merry-go-rounds revolve in full swing, old men sometimes mounting the whirligig cars;—the children are feasted at sunset; and the 'Jattra,'—sometimes a short play, sometimes a solemn dance, to the deafening clangour of tom-tom and cymbal,—goes on all through the night. Shopkeepers set up their booths, toddy flows freely, the priests profit, and the people are fleeced. There is general festivity for two or three days.

I preached a good deal at Raipoor, and sold a few books, but there were several disturbances created by drunken loafers, and one or two attempts were made to mob me, more, I think, as a practical joke than from any malicious design. The sun set with unusual loveliness,—a flood of glory streamed across the water, and the dip of wet oars caught a silver sheen, as dark little boats crossed the path of light, far away. We returned to Oolubariah after dusk.

I spent the succeeding morning in a long ramble through the village circles of 'Jagadishtapoor,' 'Golabhagunda,' and 'Kalinagar'; south of Oolubariah town. Tracts or Gospels were left in every hamlet, and two or three schools listened to Bible-stories from the lips of the Saheb.

After breakfast, no maps having come to hand, we set sail for 'Gaonkhali,' where we had promised to meet Bhagabati and Dino; and anchored for the night off the mouth of the Damoodar.

The 'James and Mary' Sandbank.

We awoke in the morning to find the boat already in mo-

tion, and pleasantly gliding across the most dangerous river shoal known to navigation. On our left, two masts of a sunken steamer rose obliquely out of the water, glistening in the early sunlight. In front of us shone the little town of Gaonkhali at the confluence of the Hugli and the Roopnarain. The much-dreaded 'James and Mary' sands (a corruption of Jal-mari, or deadly waters), are situated in the bed of the Hugli between the mouths of the Damoodar and Roopnarain. A glance at the map will at once explain the cause of their formation. Immense quantities of silt are brought down annually by the floods of the Hugli and Damoodar, and deposited here owing to the backwater of the Roopnarain, which is charged with considerable force, and checks the Hugli current forcing it to drop its silt.

The Damoodar has more than once changed its course. It is known to have entered the Hugli, some 200 years ago, about seventy miles north of its present mouth. It is supposed to have been identical with the "Jan Pedro" river, mentioned in early charts of the last century, which entered the Hugli just above Oolubariah, or fourteen miles from the point of confluence now. These down-working changes in the course of the Damoodar mark the growth of the 'James and Mary' sands. No dredging is of any avail. The sharp turn which the channel of the Hugli takes round Hugli point is an added source of disaster, causing a strain on the steering gear of large ships which often results in collapse. The vessel drifts,—her keel touches the sandbank,—the force of the current almost instantly turns her over and draws her down. Eight ocean-going steamers have thus been wrecked in modern times. One after another, they have all been buried under the mud. The 'S. S. Arcot,' of the British India Line, was the last to perish. She struck the bank at



noon on Saturday, 22nd October, six months ago. Five of her crew were drowned. Her masts are slowly but surely, disappearing, week by week. Small portions of the rigging hang about them, and playful porpoises plunge in and out, making merry over man's misfortune.

Gaonkhali

was reached at 7 o'clock on Saturday morning, January 14th. Two landing stages, similar to the one at Oolubariah, have been built by rival Companies for their respective steamers. The tide comes in here with a surge like that of the sea-shore, and rises several feet. The town is a closely packed assemblage of native huts,—on a high embankment, protected by long bamboo stakes driven into the mud. The streets, which are narrow, and dirty, wind about the edges of malarious tanks; and along the side of a disused canal. The whole place, densely crowded, has a bad unhealthy smell.

We found Bhagabati and Dino waiting for us. They had arrived two days before, after visits paid to several villages and 'hauts' on their way down the Damoodar river. We chatted together on the sunny wharf at Gaonkhali, relating our varied experiences since we had parted company near the entrance to the canal. At one place, our brethren had catechised a school of 75 boys, and sold, ere they left it, 25 copies of the Gospel books. At another place they observed a group of persons on the bank of a khal, who said they had been sitting there two long hours, waiting for some little skiff to come by, and ferry them across. These unfortunates entreated to be taken over by the preachers' boat; but Bhagabati, with humorous zeal, insisted on this stipulation, that each passenger should purchase a picc copy of one

of the Gospels as his ferry hire! The bargain was cordially struck;—the pilgrims got over the khal, and the preachers sold their books. After ‘chota hazree’ or ‘little breakfast’ (for we have two breakfasts in India) we explored the town, and preached by turns in the bazar. I sketched the temple of Sheeb, a curious building overlooking the river;—and then we started off, in our two boats, to visit

‘*A Mela,*’

which we heard would begin that afternoon at a place called Dengakhollah, just within the jaws of the Damoodar stream. As we approached from the south,—we first sighted strings of white figures, moving past the trees on the Damoodar banks; and then, having rounded the corner, a quivering mass of white, like a multitude of pigeons settled on the grass, slowly came into view. This was the mela. The swarms of white figures moved restlessly under straw coloured booths, while tiny red flags fluttered above their heads at the end of thin bamboos. We landed at 2 o’clock and began working at once. The site had been well chosen for the purpose in hand:—a large flat field, on the edge of the bank, just a few inches above the water line. The shops were fixed in the form of a square, with parallel streets,—and a large space in the centre, covered with an awning, for the night ‘Jattra’ or ‘nautch.’ A circus tent had been rigged up, outside the square of shops, which proved a tremendous attraction, one pice only being charged as entrance fee. The clumsy heel-over-head whirligig-machine was going round at a furious rate, with its cars full of delighted boys. Near the central space, a large hut had been fitted up, as an idol house; about a score of figures, gaudily decked and painted, being arranged within

it. I was reminded of a Royal group in some travelling wax-works. Mats, shoes, calico, agricultural implements, earthen vessels, oil, grain, vegetables, fish, fruit and sweetmeats &c. in the usual abundance were offered for sale. We estimated the number of people assembled at a little less than a thousand. The mela was really a 'harvest festival';—although the chief place amongst the idols was occupied by "*Gunga Debi*," the Ganges goddess. From the fact that the river is so dangerous hereabout, in the neighbourhood of the 'James and Mary,' the anger of this goddess is greatly feared.

We walked through the crowds, with our arms full of books, and preached several times, but were only able to sell 40 copies of Scripture. The people thronged around us, and listened eagerly to all we said; but they preferred spending their pice on the pleasures of the fair, to purchasing Christian books.

At 4 o'clock we crossed over to the other side of the river, where a similar, though much smaller mela was being held, near Álipore. There also we preached and discussed for an hour and a half, and sold about 30 Gospels. Returning to Dengakhollah, we anchored for the night; throughout which the din of drums, and the screech of native singing, disturbed our dreams.

UP THE ROOPNARAIN.

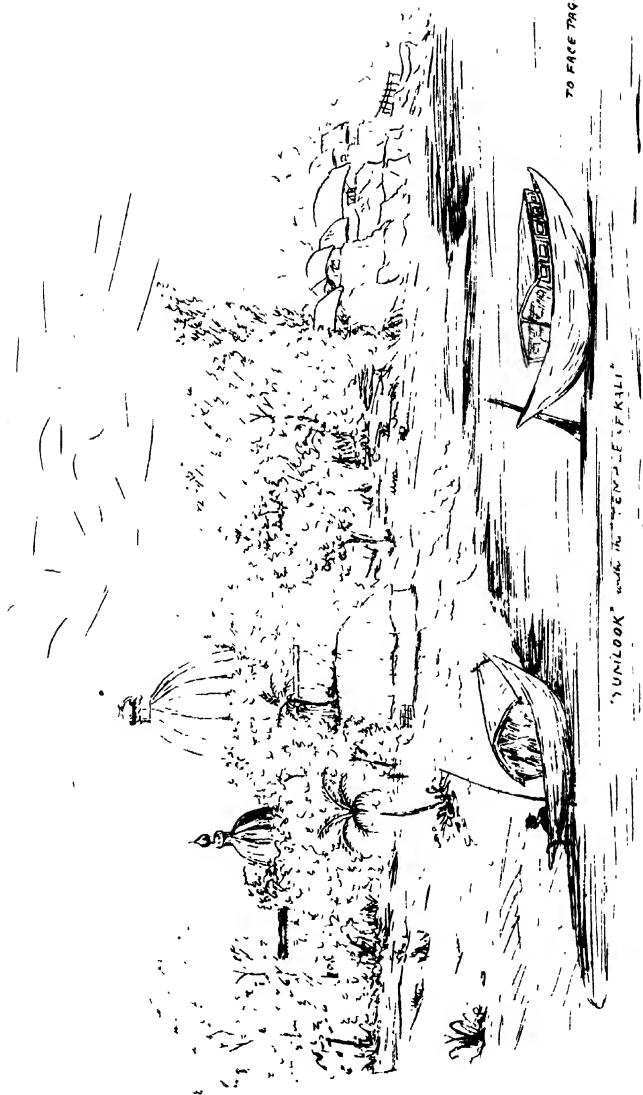
Tumlook.

At Gaonkhali the following day (January 15th,) one of our number, Bhagabati, separated from us to return to Serampore. He had been asked to attend the College for the opening of the new session after the Christmas vacation, and upon his

engaging to join us again at Tumlook, in a couple of days, I let him go. We ourselves pushed on up the Roopnarain.

The river broadens out as you enter its mouth, and becomes a fine sheet of water, with bold well-defined banks. The current flows with great force, and brings down large masses of mud,—not sand. It is quite impossible to cleave a way through the strong turbid waters, against the tide, in an ordinary boat. Even the ferry steamers which ascend this river are larger and more powerful than those on the Hugli. For example, look at one now plunging past us, projecting a pair of tall black funnels, throated with collars of brass, and belching out thick clouds of soot-laden smoke. She plunges through the water like a huge beast, snorting with rage, her great stern wheel lashing the waves with mighty foam-churning strokes; her long villainous hulk swaying to and fro, with tiers of dirty deckage, on which sit shivering crowds of thinly clad men and women. In this country extremes meet. In an hour or two those very passengers will be blinded and scorched by the terrible heat of the midday sun.

The tide bore us quickly up the river, past some large islands, to the very doors of Tumlook. The banks of the town are precipitous and soft, with rows of huts at the edge, some of which have already toppled over into the stream below. The dark dome of a famous temple lifts itself high up above the trees, and the town, with a smaller one beside it. The following historical summary is culled from Sir William Hunter's "Statistical Account of Bengal," and his article in the "Nineteenth Century" already referred to. 'Tumlook is situated in the south-eastern portion of the Midnapur district. The population in 1872 numbered 5,849 souls. In ancient times Tumlook was a famous city, and figures as a kingdom of great antiquity in the sacred writings of the Hindus. It first



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"UNLOOK" and the "KALI"

emerges upon history as a Buddhist maritime port, and is the place whence the Chinese pilgrim "Fa-Hian" took shipping to Ceylon in the early part of the 5th century. Two hundred and fifty years later another celebrated pilgrim from China "Hiouen T'sang" describes it as still an important Buddhist harbour, with ten Buddhist monasteries, a thousand monks, and a pillar by king Asoka, 200 feet high. Even after the overthrow of Buddhism by Hinduism, Tumlook continued a great entrepôt for maritime trade. Indigo, mulberry, and silk, the costly products of Bengal and Orissa, form the traditional articles of export from ancient Tumlook. In 635, 'Hiouen T'sang' found the city washed by the ocean: the earliest Hindu tradition places the sea eight miles off: and it is now fully sixty miles distant. The process of land-making at the mouth of the Hugli has left Tumlook an inland village on the banks of the Roopnarain. Buddhist princes with their 10 monasteries and 1000 monks, succumbed to Hindu kings of the warrior caste, who built a palace covering eight square miles, fortified by strong walls, and deep ditches. These kings were beaten in their turn by semi-aboriginals of the fisher tribe. As each dynasty perished, the silt buried its works. The peasants, now, in digging wells or tanks, come upon Buddhist coins, sea shells, and fragments of houses at a depth of 20 feet. The old Buddhist port lies far down in the mud. An almost forgotten name of the town:—*Ratnakar* (the mine of gems), alone commemorates its former wealth. At Tumlook is a temple sacred to the goddess "*Bargu-bhima*" or "*Kali*." Various conflicting traditions relate how the temple was founded. Some say it was built by 'Biswakarma,' the engineer of the gods. It is generally, however, ascribed to one of the ancient Hindu kings of the warrior caste. The legend most popular is as follows:

In the days of king Garudhwaj, a fisherman was employed to procure a certain kind of fish for the table of the king. One day, it so happened that he could not procure the fish, and the enraged king ordered him to be put to death. The poor man escaped to the jungle, where the goddess Kali appeared to him, and bade him lay in a stock of the fish and dry them, that she might restore them to life, whenever he wanted them, by sprinkling them with the waters of a certain well. The fisherman found it as the goddess had said, and daily took the resuscitated fish to the Palace of the king. The king, astonished at this supply, in season and out of season, questioned the man and extracted from him the secret of the immortal well. Whereupon, the goddess, who had taken up her abode in the fisherman's house, fled away, and assuming the form of a stone image, seated herself over the mouth of the well so as to hide it from view. The king, not being able to get at the well, built the temple over the image. Other legends relate that the well, besides containing the essence of immortality, had the faculty of turning everything dipped in it into gold.

The skill and ingenuity displayed in the construction of the temple are great. The shrine is surrounded by a curious threefold wall. A high foundation, consisting of large logs of wood placed upon the earth in rows, and covering the whole area to be occupied by the temple, was first constructed; over these logs bricks and stones were raised to a height of thirty feet, and upon this lofty foundation the wall was built, to a height of sixty feet more. The whole is covered with a dome-shaped roof. This massive structure, which has stoutly defied the floods and tidal waves of centuries, is softly, silently, but surely being shovelled underground by the river silt.

‘The idol is formed from a single block of stone, with the



"DINO". TOP FACE PAGE. 61.

hands and feet attached to it. The goddess is represented standing on the body of her husband, Sheeb, and has four hands. The upper of the two right hands holds a three-pointed spear, and the lower one a sword; the upper left hand grasps another sword, while the lower holds the head of a demon.

The dread of the anger of the goddess is great. The Mahrattas, when ravaging Lower Bengal, and plundering every place they came across, left Tumlook untouched; and made many valuable offerings to the temple, from fear of the wrath of the goddess. Even the river Roopnarain is said to still its waters as it flows by the temple, while a short distance above or below the shrine, the waves are turbulent.'

A flight of stairs connects the outer gate of the temple with the public road below. Outside the temple, but within its enclosure, is a *kelikadamba* tree, supposed to have the virtue of redeeming women from barrenness. Numbers of women flock to this tree and pray for offspring, suspending pieces of brick to the tree by ropes made of their hair.'

'There is also a Vishnuvite temple at Tumlook. The original was destroyed by the river, but the images were saved, and the present temple was built for their reception by a woman of the Goala caste about four or five centuries ago. In shape and construction it resembles that of the goddess Kali.'

We reached Tumlook at noon on Sunday, January 15th. After a preliminary ramble through the town, and visit to the Post Office for letters, Dino and I started out to preach. The people gathered fast as we began to sing, and listened well. We worked from end to end of the tortuous bazar street, halting at four separate points. Crowds of curious spectators, old and young, followed us back to the boat. I was laid up all day on Monday with a mild attack of dysentery;

unable to do more than take a gentle walk in the cool of the evening. We visited the present palace,—now a 40-year-old ruin, but once a Royal building of noble proportions—and were shown the grass-grown interior, and massive arched foundations by the king's son, he himself being too infirm to receive us. From some cause, left unexplained, his wealth has all slipped away. But he would seem to be fond of contemplating the scene of his former greatness, to judge from the old chairs and swinging punkahs we found in the delapidated hall. The palace was built by the grandfather of the present king.

Beborta Haut.

After persistent enquiries concerning available hauts, with more or less confusion as the result, we learned that one would be held next morning near 'Narampoor,' about three and a half miles south of Tumlook. Accordingly we dropped down stream very early, and anchored in the mouth of a khal at the indicated spot. From thence Dino and I started off in search of the market, taking a boatman with us, who carried a heavy basket of books. We walked some distance inland, till we came to a small village on the roadside, shaded by grand old trees with gnarled trunks, and twisted roots. Under their wide-sprcading branches appeared a scene of indescribable bustle and barter, enveloped in a thick atmosphere of heated dust. This was 'Beborta' haut. About a thousand people had assembled before we arrived; to whom we preached, sang, and chatted for three busy hours. Our books found a ready sale. With every copy of the Gospel we offered a tract, so that two books instead of one could be had for a pice. This plan answered well. We sold altogether during our stay, 200 Scripture portions,

including one complete Bible of large size. The numbers disposed of surprised us much, for this was only an ordinary village haut ; but such are the figures, and very encouraging we felt them to be. We returned to Tumlook, after breakfast, with the up-tide.

How steamboat passengers are landed at Tumlook.

At 2 o'clock Dino and I crossed the river in the smaller boat, and landed on the Howrah side to reconnoitre and collect information of the route to Ghatal. Having noted down what the villagers told us, and scattered a handful of tracts, we attempted to return to Tumlook, but were just too late. The tide, swiftly receding, left us stuck fast on a soft bank of mud which stretches for half a mile across the middle of the stream. Only a few inches of water covered the mud. We got out of the boat and tried to push her along, but she would not budge. We were knee-deep in slime. So there was nothing for it but to wade through, and get as near the town as we could, trusting to attract attention by lusty shouting before the tide should return and swallow us up. We reached the edge of the bank in about an hour, and were then only a hundred yards or so from Tumlook shore. The manjee, who had spied us from the budgerow roof, answered our ' Boat Ahôy ! ' and despatched a dingie to take us across.

In the meantime Bhagabati had arrived by the Calcutta steamer. He and the other passengers for Tumlook, had been dropped with their boxes and bedding on a similar mud bank higher up the river, and the thing was done so suddenly that no one had time to utter a word of remonstrance, or even to comprehend what had befallen him. Tumlook glistened in the afternoon sun, two miles away. The steamer, hoarsely rejoicing, left them to their fate, and dash-

ed off northwards, kicking out clouds of muddy spray as it went along.

After much altercation our brother prevailed upon some one to carry his goods, while he himself sorrowfully doffed his patent leather shoes, turned up his trousers, and splashed forward at the head of his troop. Unfortunate men! They thought to have disembarked, a respectable band of pilgrims, at Tumlook town; instead of which they found themselves deposited in the broad bed of a river, and left to file their way as best they could through soft slush to the tantalizing shore.

Who will claim for Tumlook a place within the pale of civilization, albeit a passenger steamboat does call at a sand-bank near, once a day? Bhagabati in mid-stream, gazing with stupefied wonder at the retreating tail of the dastardly steamer, and then at the all-inviting but far-distant town, would repay the study, and immortalize the canvas of any artist. I have his own authority for saying, that, when he found himself thus stranded and forsaken, he could only exclaim, with helpless repetition, "What is this!" "What is this!" Practical experiment, however, soon led him to the unhappy conclusion that it was mud, and must be plodded through, though a very slough of despond! Three hours later he entered the budgerow cabin. But it was long before his face lost a certain expression of mournful resignation; even under the influence of hearty welcome and a good cup of tea.

Our visit to the temple of Kali.

The following morning we paid a visit to the temple of Kali. It has three apartments: an innermost shrine, directly under the dome, containing the idols; a narrow passage in front called the 'Chamber of Audience;' and a large oblong



BHAGABATI.

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court, like a Church nave, with thick arched walls; one half of which is used as a 'Hall of Sacrifice,' the other half being kept for festival dancing. A pair of small greasy doors, closed and padlocked, shut off the shrine from our view; the holy Brahmin, whose sacred touch may alone let in the daylight, not having yet gone his morning round. The Hall of Sacrifice with its low pillory (shaped like a lyre) for the victim's neck, its blood-stained floor, and dark-spattered walls, wore a grim slaughter-house look which made us shudder. Buffaloes, goats, and sheep, are sacrificed here. The blood is first offered in a bowl to the goddess, and afterwards sprinkled about the court. The flesh goes to the priests. The head of the victim must be struck off at one blow, if not, it is an evil omen of non-acceptance. The dome rises high up above the roof of the temple. The stones of which it is composed are said to be of immense size. It has a number of fluted edges, very sharp, and in perfect condition. The lower portion is made hideous by obscene carvings, somewhat obliterated, however, by wind and wet. On the north side of the building is the *kelikadamba* tree mentioned before. It was in full bloom with large white flowers when we stood before it. Some portions of the branches, low and straggling, and about the thickness of a man's thigh, were literally covered, like the handle of a cricket bat, with strange black twine, made of women's hair. Some of the threads had grown rusty from exposure to the weather. And each little rope suspended a bit of stone or brick about a foot from the branch. There were also several pieces of discoloured tape and rotting string. On the ground at the foot of the tree was a bad-smelling mass of rubbish and oily hair-cuttings. A flight of steps leads down to the bazar from the sacrificial hall.

The "Saraswati" Puja.

The town was *en fête* that day, in honour of Saraswati, the goddess of learning and letters. Light bamboo arches spanned the bazar at short distances apart, covered with evergreen, and decorated with paper flowers. Up one street which led off from the bazar, the preparations for processional gaiety were more gorgeous still; an arch at the entrance bearing the additional ornament of a silken flag, on which were the words "Ashoon Mahashoy"! (Let your honour approach) a Bengali way of saying, "Welcome." Saraswati is said to have invented the "Deb-nagri" characters. Schoolboys sometimes honour her by worshipping their ink-pots. Several images of the goddess, adorned with white flowers and rosettes, were being set up here and there as we strolled through the town. Boys and girls were especially busy, and shewed much taste and skill in their share of the work. The Post Office compound had been turned into a perfect arbour of leafy arches,—with coloured prints, illustrative of Hindu mythology,—fastened to the inner sides. These I fear were products of Europe, exported by the million to glut the purses of inconsiderate firms, who little dream, and perhaps little care what an impetus their trade gives to lingering superstitious beliefs. It was remarkable, however, that no idols, or figures of 'horrid mien' were thus portrayed. About 11 o'clock, as we sat on the budgerow roof, we observed a line of boys, each holding aloft a thin bamboo with a small red flag flying at its peak, file down the river bank, wade some distance through the shallow water, and then return; accompanied all the while by the beating of drums and the cling-clang of some loud-sounding gong.

Gopenathpoor.

We left Tumlook the same afternoon, and with some difficulty got clear of the long stretching meshes of mud which surround that ancient port. At 3 o'clock we anchored off Gopenathpoor on the Howrah side of the river, in time for the bi-weekly haut. We remained over an hour, and sold 75 portions of Scripture. Arrangements were being completed for a mela to begin that night, and last three days. One young Babu bought of me, in driblets of four and five, no less than thirty copies of St. Luke's Gospel, which he gave away to the poorer people. Our work over, we started afresh, and anchored for the night a little to the south of the canal lock.

Two Markets in one day.

Next morning early we started off in the preachers' boat to visit a small haut about two miles beyond the canal, on the Midnapore bank. It is resorted to chiefly for the purchase of rice and fish. The wind blew hard against us, so that we were much delayed, and arrived only in time to find the market breaking up. However, we sold 39 Scripture portions to the few people who lingered behind; and then sailed back as fast as we could to a larger haut at "Kantapookur," near the canal lock. A hasty breakfast, and then to work in this new field. A very small piece of ground, protected by the river bund, and bounded on the remaining sides by huts and ditches, held a concourse of living humanity, which numbered at a rough calculation some 600 persons of all ages and degrees of perfumery. The men wore merely a thin dirty cloth wrapped round their loins. The upper part of their bodies shone with oil polish and perspiration. As we squeezed through the crowd, receiving on our jackets greasy impressions of men and things; a long bare arm, reeking with

moisture, would be now and again stretched out over our shoulder, and rubbed hard along its whole length from wrist to armpit, against our cheek. The sensation can be more easily imagined than described. But this was a trifle compared with the nauseating effect of forced contact with all manner of skin diseases and leprous sores. Leprosy seems to create far less repulsion in the mind of a Hindoo than would naturally be supposed. There are two kinds. One is the white leprosy, which gradually changes the colour of the skin, in patches, to a sickly white. A Doctor assures me this is a harmless and non-infectious form of the disease; in fact, strictly speaking, not leprosy at all. Many sweet-meat-sellers, bakers, and others, are freely permitted to ply their trades in the open street, when suffering from it. But the bad form of leprosy, that which ulcerates the body all over, and slowly eats away the flesh at the extremities, I am informed, on the same authority, is extremely contagious. Yet poor sufferers even of this kind; their loathsome sores open to sun and dust, or bandaged with filthy rags; are allowed in India, at all events here in Bengal, to move about amongst the crowds in the bazar, sit down at street corners, and beg for pice and food by the horrible exhibition of their festering wounds. The pice they handle passes on to others, and must of necessity propagate the disease. Healthy children playing about may become infected by accidental contact; and even dogs suffer from the terrible scourge. It is pretty certain that people living in Calcutta and Howrah, are daily exposed to contagion through a hundred unnoticed but effectual means. Much of the food we eat, the bread, and rice, and pulse, is prepared or handled in some way by men and women in whose flesh are the seeds and the sores of this most virulent disease.

But to return to the market. In the midst of so large a crowd, so closely hemmed in, the preacher's message could scarcely compete with the bustle and business of the hour. It was hard to get the people to listen, and still harder to dispose of our books. There was scarcely even a show of languid interest in the spoken word. We got outside the precincts of the *haut*, and stood on the *bund* above, haranguing the seething multitude at the foot of the slope. It was little use. A few women enquired of each other what the noise was about; a few men turned their heads and looked up, as they bent over baskets of fish in the act of barter; and a handful of boys clambered to our vantage ground intent on fun at the *Saheb's* expense. *Dino* dubbed the people 'Gospel-hardened,' and probably with truth, for the spot lies on the high waterway to Calcutta, and must have been very often the scene of missionary effort. Still, we sold 45 Gospels and distributed a larger number of tracts.

An afternoon and evening on the roof of the boat.

At half-past 2 we weighed anchor, and rowed steadily on up the river as long as the tide served. The banks narrowed more and more as we proceeded, and in many places shewed signs of the river's ravaging power. Great gaps occurred here and there in the *bund*, where large pieces had been washed away, in spite of many 'spurs' designed to protect it. The roofs of village huts appeared at intervals, peeping over the *bund*; shewing how low the ground is on the inner side, and what cause for anxiety a specially high tide in the rainy season must of necessity be. The fishermen of these parts have a curious device. They use empty barrels, (apparently beer casks) as 'floats' for their nets, which sometimes stretch two-thirds across the stream,

the barrels spotting the net line all along. We saw several thus placed. Others were lashed upright on the decks of the boats, with groups of men sitting round them, and little lamps throwing dark shadows of the casks over the water; altogether a curiously incongruous spectacle, suggestive to the uninitiated of Bacchanalian orgies. It was 7 o'clock when we passed the village of Manpoor;—a dusky line of huts, with a few twinkling lights, and faint strains of puja music. The half-moon lent a pale glimmer to the surface of the stream as we glided along.

The higher reaches of the Roopnarain.

We came on through the night to "Gopigunge," and from thence all started off in the smaller boat at 6 A. M. to try and reach Ghatal. The air was keen and cold before sunrise as we rounded point after point swathed in white mist: but we had a long distance to go and looked forward to our destination in cheerful mood. The river becomes very narrow indeed beyond Gopigunge and twists about like a dark snake. The whole valley which it drains is a vast paddy (or rice) field, hence the delusive appearance of the banks, which are not what they seem, *viz.*, natural romantic heights, through which the stream has cut a deep channel for itself; but artificial bunds raised to protect the low lying lands. Hence, too, the appearance of villages and dwellings overlooking the river; they are perched on the bunds to preserve them dry amid a region of marsh and often wild devastating flood. The bund is at once a barrier from the stream, a high road for traffic, and a lofty foundation for the homesteads of the people.

At some bends of the river the scenery is exceedingly picturesque; graceful bamboo clumps drooping over the water;



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dexterous fishing craft skimming the tiny bay, and shooting out queer-shaped nets; fine Pépúl trees which have rooted themselves in the thick bank, dispensing grateful shade over neatly thatched huts; with here and there a pretty mosque, or painted temple, and a sleepy bazar.

We witnessed a very amusing incident, illustrative of Indian social life, as we went along. Two women suddenly emerged from their village seclusion, walked quietly along the high bank to a spot where a basket was lying; and stood on either side of it facing each other. One of them lifted up the basket, and there immediately began a shrill impassioned altercation which converted these seemingly peaceful housewives into perfect furies. They screamed at and pelted one another with the strongest most voluble abuse, leaning over the basket and clutching wildly at each other's hair. Their rage was dreadful to witness, yet for the life of me I could not discover in the basket or under the basket any exciting cause. Bhagabati explained that Bengali women who have a quarrel, on becoming exhausted, or being interfered with, conclude a truce, and place a basket mouth downwards at a certain spot, which is lifted by mutual consent the following day, when their pent-up anger bursts forth afresh! So that this terrible fight was merely the business-like resumption of an old grievance with accumulated zeal. The tide failed us when we had gained a point nine miles short of Ghatal, and this effectually stopped our further progress by boat. Bhagabati and Dino set off to walk thither, fetch all our letters, and return by hired dingie; while my wife and I, remaining in the Pánsi, dropped down with the ebb tide to our starting point, Gopigunge. We arrived about 1 o'clock, hungry, hot, sleepy, and tired.

Rough Logic.

At 4 o'clock I set off to walk a couple of miles inland, where a large school was said to meet in the village of Kaipoor. When I arrived, some 70 or 80 boys trooped out of the school house, and formed a ring in front of the verandah, while the Pundits and I sat on chairs in their midst. Then ensued a prolonged and profitless discussion on the subject of religion. Finding themselves beaten at every point, the pundits at length became abusive, and I was fain to end the discussion by singing some Bengali hymns. But when the singing was over, and leave had been taken, the boys, instigated by their preceptors, set up a wild hooting full of derision, and followed me for about a mile, throwing lumps of dry mud which struck my back with a nasty sort of 'thud.' I stopped once or twice, and faced round, when the whole body scampered off into the jungle, watching to renew the attack as soon as my back should be turned. The Pundits strolled behind me, loudly laughing at this excellent joke. They made a show of restraining the boys, however, upon my remarking that clods of earth were poor substitutes for arguments, and it would be better to overcome my logic than pelt my coat. Their aim was clearly to make me angry, and then cast my temper in my teeth as unworthy of the religion which I professed. It was dark before the yelling procession halted, and desisted from further annoyance. I was pleased afterwards to listen to the chatter of two little girls, who walked behind me, one of whom was relating an account of the affair to her companion, and priding herself on not having joined in the shouts of the boys. The missionary's forbearance had won her attention, and doubtless she repeated the story at home with no very com-



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plimentary references to my young opponents. It was something to have sown the seed of healthy public opinion!

Bhagabati and Dino returned from Ghatal during the evening, bringing our letters and papers.

Bhatorah Haut.

Next morning (January 21st), we took the boats round a bend of the river just above Gopigunge, and anchored off "Bhatorah," for the market which is held on Saturdays and Tuesdays at 8 A. M. There is an outpost of the Ampta Police Station here, and I was pleased to sell a Hindi Gospel to the Daroga in charge. Bhatorah is the northernmost settlement on the Rupnarain in Howrah district. It is the centre of 21 villages, with a population of 9000 souls. There is a school at Koolia, a mile off,—but we had no need to visit it, for the boys all came to the haut. About 200 people, altogether, mustered on a bit of open ground near the village temple, where the market was held. Bhagabati preached quietly to a steady audience under the shade of some trees; Dino enchanted the people with Christian song: and I stood on the steps of the temple busily selling our books. The people were very friendly, and listened with pleased eyes as I ran over the contents of the books, and told them the life of Christ. Notwithstanding the fact that they were poor village folk, and the market was a very small one, we sold 48 copies of the Gospels and distributed large numbers of tracts. At noon we set sail again, homewards, and reached the mouth of the

"Bakshil khal"

in an hour and a half. This khal is deep, and makes a convenient waterway, penetrating for some miles into that portion of the district which surrounds Joypoor. When our budgerow touched the bank I sprang ashore, and was soon

engaged in an interesting discussion with some "Jattra walahs," (actors), who had landed there while travelling past, to rest under the trees and enjoy their noonday sleep. They seemed quite delighted to meet with a missionary, and begged me to answer their questions regarding the relative values of the Hindu and Christian religions.

"Well," I said, "we must take up one point at a time, and stick to that, do you agree?"

"Oh yes," they answered, "that is only fair."

"Suppose then," I began, "that a religion be given by God, it will be like God's other gifts, the sunshine and the rain; it will be world-wide, will it not? The sun does not shine in Europe and leave India dark; there is only one sun for all lands and all men. So the God-given religion must be a world-wide religion: found in every clime, adapted to every race. To put it the other way, a religion of *one* race or *one* land cannot be the religion sent from God. Now, do you admit this? Are you quite sure that such a proposition is incontrovertible?"

"It cannot be otherwise," they replied, "you have spoken the truth."

"Well then," I said, "it follows from your own admission that the Hindu religion cannot be the religion sent from God. It is not a missionary faith; it is rooted in this Indian soil, and confined to the peoples of this one land. Its great antiquity but adds force to the condemnation which excludes it from all claim to the gratitude and trust of the world. Turn, however, to the religion of Jesus Christ, and you will at once remark a wonderful contrast. Visit any of the cities of Europe, and accost an ordinary stranger with the question, "Do you know who Ram was, or Kali, or Sheeb?" he will stare at you in blank astonishment and

answer—No! Yet travel where you will, east, west, north, or south, and you will find that in every country under heaven the name of Jesus is a familiar word. You yourselves, in this Indian village, are obliged to confess that you have heard a good deal of that world-wide name. The words of Jesus, the books of the Christian religion, are printed in almost all the dialects of human speech and everywhere people buy them and love to read them. It is not so with your sacred Shasters. Do you not see the difference? Do you not acknowledge the higher claim of Christianity to be reckoned a God-given faith?"

This line of argument appealed to these men, and three of them straightway purchased copies of the Gospels, and sat down to read them, forgetting their sleep. A young Babu, one "Behari Lall Chatterjee," accompanied me to the boat, and purchased an English Bible. Sitting down in front of me he leaned forwards, and assuming a confidential undertone, begged me to send away the curious crowd looking in at our cabin windows. When I asked him why he wished me to send them away, he replied, "*I want to convert myself to Christianity.*" "But," I said, "the first step must be to renounce your present religion. Are you satisfied that salvation cannot be found in Hinduism, are you ready to give it up?"

"Oh yes" he answered, "I believe that Hinduism is utterly false, and Christianity is the only hope of the world. I want to convert myself."

"Then," said I, "tell your fellow countrymen. Speak out your conviction to the crowd. Declare solemnly your fixed intention to forsake the worship of idols, to these your friends, and I will believe you."

There was no answer, so, turning to the by-standers, I

myself communicated to them the young man's resolve. They laughed loudly, and he himself joined in. It came out afterwards, as I expected, that hope of an easy situation, and a comfortable living on the strength of joining our ranks, had impelled him to come to me. I spoke very seriously to him of the responsibility involved in becoming a Christian, and he seemed at last a little ashamed of the mercenary motives which his conduct had disclosed.

"Joypoor."

The same afternoon Bhagabati, Dino, and I went off in the little boat, and pushed up the Bakshil khal as far as we could, without being hopelessly jammed. We found quite a long line of boats stuck fast in the mud, where the khal narrowed to the likeness of a meadow ditch. However we had penetrated some two and a half miles from its broad mouth in the Roopnarain. The village of Jamtea was close at hand. Dino remained behind to preach there and look after the boat, while Bhagabati and I walked off to visit Joypoor, just in sight as a dusky line of trees near the horizon, some three miles farther away. For a time our route lay along the jagged edge of the khal, which looks like a large crack in a vast field. Then we came to a raised embankment, which must have been at one time an excellent roadway, running right across this watery plain. Its course is zigzag, tacking right and left to the several villages scattered about. The country now wears a very desolate look; it is nothing but an endless stretch of uncultivated bog land, with conical hillocks here and there, upon which are perched groups of isolated huts. The bund road has been broken up and washed away in several places, and no steps seem likely to be taken for its repair.

It was sundown when we entered Joypoor: but we visited two patshalas, met with a kindly reception, and sold about 20 portions of Scripture. At the second patshala, the guru, an old man, begged me to forgive his apparent discourtesy in refusing to purchase one of our books; pathetically admitting that if he read the life of Jesus, the story would eat away his peace of mind, and utterly destroy his rest in the faith which had served him all his life. I prevailed upon him at last to take a copy of the Gospel of John. The people told us that no Padre or preacher of Christianity had ever before visited this village: and begged us, when we left, to come back to them as soon as we could. We were thankful beyond measure that our steps had been directed thither. On the road home, we stopped several times to sell copies of Scripture to lonely bands of men camping out in rude huts, and sitting round fires, cooking their evening meal. Village dogs snarled at us as we passed along, and jackals made the night air ring with their terrible howls. It was long after dark when we reached the boat in the khal, and not without a slight mishap, for Bhagabati sprawled on all fours into a bed of slush while attempting to cross the ditch higher up. No sooner had we seated ourselves, cross-legged, in the boat, than our glimmering lantern revealed the form of a wild boar stealthily strolling along the bank. We got back to the budgerow at half-past eight.

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Bakshil Haut.

The next morning (Sunday, January 22nd) we preached at the Bakshil haut, by far the largest we had yet seen. Over 2000 people assembled at the mouth of the khal, and immense quantities of vegetables and other agricultural produce were offered for sale. The people, however, were more loth

to buy our books than those of any other market to which we had gone. This was largely due to the persistent efforts of several Brahmins who went about through the crowd, depreciating the Scriptures, and warning would-be purchasers not to buy. I rebuked several of them on the ground that they were despising books they had never read, and this so openly wherever I could, that many of them began to desist. Nevertheless their words had created a bad impression, which it was difficult, and in most cases impossible, to remove. I managed to sell only 48 Gospels, though I worked hard for hours, and Dino and Bhagabati only disposed of ten.

Immediately the market was over, we weighed anchor, and proceeded southwards to Koila Ghat, for the market to be held there the following day, and said to be only second in size to that of Bakshil.

Work by the Wayside.

Leaving the budgerow at Koila Ghat, Bhagabati, Dino, and I crossed the river to the Howrah side. The great pilgrim road from Calcutta to Puri here reaches the Roopnarain. Bhagabati remained behind to preach in the village of Lowpulla, (which consists of scattered groups of houses on either side of the road), while Dino and I went on to visit more inland spots. We were joined by a little lad, belonging to Tamultollah, who walked some distance with us, and received a few tracts to circulate amongst his friends. About two miles from the river we came to a small English school by the wayside, held in the house of the headmaster, Babu Jodunath Sircar. He told me he was educated in the Free Church Institution, Calcutta, and had read the Bible with much profit. I persuaded him to buy a Bengali Gospel for one of his boys. He was anxious to procure the "Pil-

grim's Progress" and promised to send a man to Koila Ghat for a copy the following day. Turning off the great road here, we struck northwards by a village path to Motilalla. The people of this neighbourhood are mostly farmers, very poor, and very illiterate. Many of them paused in their work at the granary, or in the fields, as we drew near to speak: and either a Gospel or a tract was left in every hamlet through which we passed. At Chakachora we came upon a veritable 'Golgotha' in the open meadow; charred wood, skulls, and human bones lying all about. I think that spot was even more offensive than the usual burning places on the river bank, where at least there is some suggestion of purification in the flow of running water. As the sun went down we got round again to Lowpulla, picked up Bhagabati, and returned to our anchorage at Koila Ghat. After dinner, it being Sunday, we held a little service together in the budgerow cabin.

"Koila Haut."

The morning dawned dimly through a haze of cold river mist, and disclosed a cheerless sky heavy with rain clouds. I paid a preliminary visit to the market place, before *chota hazri*, and finding it large and convenient, set up a camp table in the centre, loaded with books. Two fine trees over-shadowed the stall. Great numbers assembled at the haut, and for over an hour book-selling went on briskly, the three of us singing, preaching, and discussing by turns, while my wife took charge of the table. The sudden descent of rain drove us away after that first spell of busy work. However, with my overcoat pockets full of books, and an armful besides, I returned to the market sheltered by a big umbrella, and thus succeeded in selling 32 additional copies. Altogether, in

spite of the rainy interruption, we sold 125 portions of Scripture at Koila Haut. Considering that the place had been very frequently visited before, we felt not a little encouraged by the results of our work. An hour or so afterwards we dropped anchor again at Kanthapookur. The market there had already assembled and I ventured out in the hope of selling some more books notwithstanding wind-driven rain. There was no contending, however, for any length of time with that sort of hindrance; and I was soon forced to beat a hasty retreat.

Our brethren Bhagabati and Dino left us here to return to Howrah *viâ* the canal, while my wife and I pursued our course down the Roopnarain, intending to 'double the Cape' off Gaonkhali and voyage home by that longer way. I gave each of the Pánsi boatmen a copy of the New Testament in Bengali, as memorials of our trip; and a small coin with which to celebrate their arrival at home in festive style.

'Good-bye' to Tumlook.

Rain poured all that evening, and rendered the cooking of our dinner rather a dismal and piteous operation. The one servant we had taken with us had to move about on the deck clad only with thin strips of calico, which, being drenched, clung fast to his skin, and served but to make his condition still more miserable, wet, and cold. Our cooking stove, (a mere wooden box, on end, with a small iron grate let in from the top), usually occupied a corner of the tiny deck near the cabin door; but that evening we had it brought inside. The little room, shut up all round, soon filled with charcoal smoke. A budgerow is not the most comfortable sort of shelter on a stormy night.

Next day, at noon, January 24th, we came in sight of

Tumlook; but too late to get near the town on account of the mud banks which the retreating tide had already partly exposed. Not a ferryman on the Howrah bank would take me across, and in attempting to circumnavigate the obstructing islands, the budgerow presently ran aground. One of our men, lured by the promise of *bucksheesh*, tried several times during the afternoon to wade to the shore, and bring off our letters, but without success. Finally with the turn of the tide, we got freely afloat once more, and reached the town late in the evening. Here at last, after many disappointments, we received the expected maps.

We left Tumlook very early on the succeeding morning, and were tossed about rather roughly by a blustering north wind, which at length drove us up the shingle on the Howrah shore. Landing at once to make enquiries, I found that a market would be held the same afternoon at a spot some distance inland, to the north of Deolee village; and also that a larger one would meet next morning at the mouth of Radhapore khal, a mile or so down the coast.

“Deolee Haut.”

The village circle denominated ‘Deolee,’ is composed of several small hamlets each known by a separate name. Before breakfast I visited some of these, notably “Amberia” and “Goodurbeny,” at which latter place it was pleasant to fall in with a band of young farmers, disciples of a local guru, who gathered round me in the open field, listened while I preached, and purchased several books. They were very eager to know the truth. I returned to the boat by the river bund, and after breakfast set off again in search of Deolee haut. A walk of about $2\frac{1}{2}$ miles through paddy fields, (fortunately dry) and along village paths more or less intri-

cate, some ending in a blind corner, some leading no whither, brought me to the site of the market. A few flimsy erections of bamboo poles and straw mats dotted a cramped piece of uneven land. Only four persons from the adjoining village had gathered together by the time I arrived; and they told me the market would not begin for another hour. So I put down the small basket of books, which I had brought with me, and commenced work by holding a palaver with these four. Others came in from the neighbourhood, a few at a time, but there were only eighty persons at the haut altogether. I preached and sang incessantly for several hours, and sold 42 Scriptures of which 39 were Gospels. It was dusk when I got back to the boat, very tired and hoarse, but thankful to have sent so many evangelists into that village district.

Komolpore Haut.

Next day we anchored at the mouth of the Radhapore khal, where, close to the bund road, on the inner side, a large market is wont to be held. It meets about noon. The weather was pleasant and sunny all the morning, so we fixed a large table at one end of the haut ready laden with books. Hardly had the first batch of stall-keepers assembled when big drops of rain began to spatter upon us, and we were forced to seek shelter under a shed. Even then the roof leaked badly, and we began to get wet. However, we sold no less than 50 portions of Scripture before going away. The Babu who had given us the use of the shed was exceedingly courteous, and urged the people to purchase our books. He himself bought a translation of Bunyan's Holy War for his little daughter. Two young men waded out to the boat afterwards, as she rode at anchor in the pelting rain, to buy

copies of the Gospel. A thunderstorm followed close on the heels of that first shower, and the manjee refused to venture from the land until it had somewhat abated. The Roop-narain is a dangerous river, and budgerows capsize very easily in a gust of wind. The sky cleared a little towards evening, and the tide bore us swiftly down by 7 o'clock to Gaonkhali.

A tempestuous night.

I advised the manjee to drop anchor in the mouth of the khal, and had he done so, we should not have spent so unhappy a night. At 10 o'clock a fearful hurricane burst upon us with cracking thunder, the first gust of wind blowing off the great tarpaulin on the roof, and forcing open all the windows of the cabins, through which rain and tempest came tearing their boisterous way. Our lights were puffed out on the instant, and we were roughly awakened from sleep to find the boat lurching heavily, and everything being blown about in the wildest confusion. I sprang out of bed, and succeeded with difficulty in fastening up the windows on the storm side, and restraining my wife from jumping off the boat as she was. Great waves dashed against the sides of our little vessel, and furious rain poured down from a black muttering sky. Gaonkhali is situated in a singularly exposed position, swept by the tides of two large rivers, and open to the full force of blustering winds on three of its sides. The Steamer Jetty of Messrs. Hoare, Miller and Co. juts out from the land, and rests on a heavy barge anchored fast to the mud beneath, yet obeying every impulse of the tossing waves. To this barge the prow of our budgerow was lightly tied when the gale hurled its first blast flush on our broadside. It took our men an anxious half hour of desperate

effort to haul up close, and lash the two boats firmly together from bows to stern. Even then the force of the waves tossed them up and down, shook them violently, and caused a terrible straining of the binding ropes. Sharp collisions occurred every few seconds, and the wind rose steadily higher in rapid gusts. Our position was dangerous. Had the ropes snapped, and they were groaning under the strain of the tempest, certain death would have been our fate in the cruel grip of the storm. My wife begged me to take her on shore, without a moment's delay. The night looked black and terrible when we got safely outside the cabin, and stood clinging to the nearest object on the wind-swept deck. Vivid flashes of lightning illuminated the weird scene, thunder rolled overhead, and the rain came down in sheets driven before the gale. Our boatmen crouched and shivered on the Jetty, and were drenched with hissing spray by every wave that swept along. Watching our opportunity, we gained a footing on the barge, and hurried up the quivering gangway to the dark little town. The streets ran torrents of water, and it was slippery work getting along in the teeth of the tempest. At length we saw a light glimmering through the doorway of a native hut, in which were sitting round a dish of rice a company of men and women more or less under the influence of drink. One of the men agreed to guide us to the Government staging bungalow where we hoped to get shelter for the rest of the night. He led the way, and twice stumbled on the slippery path, falling headlong into the slushy mud. A walk of two miles, along the banks of the old canal, brought us to the spot about midnight, drenched through and through, our teeth chattering with cold. A Babu, the Deputy Magistrate, was there in possession, snugly asleep. In answer to our knocking, however, his servant appeared, and we obtained

the use of a draughty room, absolutely dark, and devoid of any furniture save a round table and two wooden bedsteads. We laid ourselves down in our wet clothing on one of these, and shivered till daylight, when we got up and crawled back somehow to the boat. That morning our malee (gardener) was to have come by steamer to Gaonkhali with a fresh supply of 'the staff of life.' But he did not turn up. That morning also we had hoped to do good work at the Gaonkhali haut, but continued rain made it impossible, and, indeed, we both felt very unwell with cold and sore-throat after our night's adventure. So we rested quietly in the cabin all day, speculating with disappointed appetites on the cause of the malee's non-appearance.

The following day (Saturday, January 28th), dawned bright and sunny with light clouds flecking the sky. The steamer came in, but again no malee appeared, no tempting basket of fresh bread. That afternoon, as I was still unfit for preaching, and there were church matters to be attended to at home, we took tickets by the Eastern Bengal State Railway Co.'s steamer for Diamond Harbour, and thence by train to Sealdah station, Calcutta. We reached Howrah at 9 P. M., and learned that the malee had really left at the appointed time, and had not since been heard of.

We returned to Gaonkhali the following day in order to be present at the haut held there early on Monday morning.

A lingering farewell to Gaonkhali.

By 9 o'clock our stall was placed in the midst of the market, and we were soon hard at work. My wife remained at the table whilst I went about amongst the crowds, my arms piled with books. There were hundreds of people present. They bought slowly, but listened well. We sold 66 Scripture portions, 54 of which were copies of the Gospels.

At 11:30 we weighed anchor, and attempted to cross the river in a straight line to the Obelisk, opposite Hugli Point. The attempt was a signal failure. The incoming tide forced us far up the mouth of the Roopnarain, and although a strong wind was blowing from the north-west in our favour, three hours elapsed before we had fairly rounded the cape and entered the Hugli current. We did not lose sight of Gaonkhali all that day. At 5 o'clock we anchored near the mouth of a khal about midway up the Howrah bank between the Roopnarain and Damoodar rivers. I then visited a small village on the inner side of the Bund, called Seebgunge. The guru of the patshala received me courteously and allowed me to talk for a long while to the assembled boys. I was agreeably surprised to see his own little girl sitting in the midst of the boys, and learning to read and write. A few years ago this would have been impossible. Hearing that she had a great desire to possess one of my books, I gave her a copy of the 'Parables,' first ascertaining that she was able to read.

Goojerpoor Halt.

Next morning I started off very early to visit an inland market at the village of Goojerpoor. Abdool, one of our boatmen, accompanied me, bearing on his head a heavy basket of books. We first went southwards along the bund road, till our progress in that direction was intercepted by a sudden turning off of the khal at right angles. Being unable to cross it, we had to walk a good mile out of our way in search of something that might serve as a bridge. Presently we came to a bank of earth, which, for purposes of irrigation had been thrown across the stream as a dam, and so went over. Then our route lay through a sea of paddy fields

for two or three miles, till we struck upon a narrow raised path, which led by many a devious way from village to village, and finally brought us in a bath of perspiration to Goojerpoor. This haut is more easily reached from the banks of the Roopnarain, had we known of it earlier, but at all events we had reached it at last, and were bent on pushing the sale of our books. For a long while no one would buy. It is a good plan in such cases to induce one of the principal men of the place to purchase the first copy, his example is very quickly followed by others.

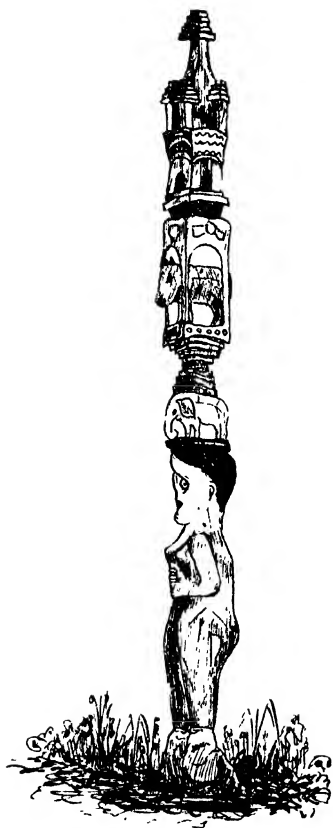
There is an English school at Goojerpoor close to the market, which I was asked to inspect. An hour passed very pleasantly in conversation with the masters and boys. Some 50 of them crowded into the room. I spread out our books on the table, and then preached in Bengali, urging all to buy copies of the Life of Christ and study it for themselves. The address over I was asked to say a few words in English, and sing an English hymn. It was a great pleasure to comply with such a request. They would have had me stay much longer, but time pressed and I was anxious to visit another market a few miles up the Damoodar that same afternoon. One of the masters begged me to present the school with a copy of the English Bible, which I gladly did upon receiving a promise that a portion of it should be daily studied in the English class. A student bought another for himself, as also an English copy of the Pilgrim's Progress. Having sold altogether 68 Scripture portions that morning, we hurried back over the fields in the midday heat to the budgerow at Seebgunge. The anchor was immediately weighed, and we set off to find 'Kharoobariah Haut,' on the east bank of the Damoodar river, just beyond the town of Shampoer. The men towed us along all the way.

We reached Shampoore very late, about 5 o'clock ; and the market was still a mile and a half distant. However, the manjee and I ran across country as nimbly as we could, and arrived at the empty haut just after dusk. There remained but a handful of salesmen to whom I could preach. Nevertheless they listened with great respect, and purchased four copies of Scriptures ; after which we piloted our way back to the boat, more by instinct than anything else, for there were no paths to guide us.

Goorchabuk.

Three hours stiff towing, brought us, next morning, to the Goorchabuk khal, near which a large market assembled just before noon. The place is on the same side of the river as Shampoore and only a few miles above. But the many shallows and sandbanks rendered navigation a clumsy process. I set up a large book-stall in the centre of the haut, and preached for nearly three hours,—to little purpose, however, as far as sales went, since only 20 Gospels were purchased as the result. The *assigned* reason was this, that another Padre Saheb had visited the place a month or two before, and distributed 'free' some hundreds of books. What the *real* reason was, I do not know. One Babu came up to the stall and denounced me to the crowd as a *thief*, "For" said he, "the Queen has commanded all the Missionaries to give away these books free of cost ; and yet this Saheb is attempting to sell them and pocket the money ! Let nobody buy ! Don't you buy !" It was useless to try and refute such an assertion, and the people clearly believed it ; so I put my books back into the basket, folded up my table, and walked away.

It may be well to insert here some explanation of the sketch which faces this page. The "Brisha Kastya" (or



"BRISHA KASRYA"

TO FACE PAGE. 88.

"Bullock-post") is a monument often seen on the river banks, sometimes in the heart of a village, and occasionally at the corner of a city street. It is a monument erected in memory of a dead relative by the nearest of kin. According to the Shasters it ought to be made of sandal-wood, but the wood of the Bel tree is now generally used instead. In the sketch a female figure appears at the base of the monument, which shows that the deceased was a woman. The form of the bullock, which gives the memorial its character and name, symbolizes the belief that the souls of the dead are carried to heaven (Boikunto-dham, or the house of rest,) by clinging fast to a bullock's tail. That of the elephant reminds the Hindu that the river of death must be crossed, and the elephant will carry him over. In every instance the nose of the human figure is found to be chipped off, and this is accounted for by the superstition, still very prevalent, that, if worn as a charm, the nose of a 'Brisha-Kastya' is potent to protect from the power of ghosts. The upper portions of the stake are sometimes gaudily painted. The whole monument stands about five feet high, and might be carved out of a ten-inch pole. The privilege of erecting it is only permitted to those who can afford very costly funeral obsequies for their friends; including large gifts of gold, silver, and bell-metal utensils to Brahmins. The sketch is a fac-simile of a particular Brisha-Kastya, which I saw in a village near Howrah.

We left Goorchabuk with the ebb tide after the market dispersed, and anchored at the mouth of the Damoodar river, till midnight; when, the tide having turned, we started again, and reached Oolubariah early on the morning of Thursday, February 2nd. The same evening at 6 o'clock we passed under Howrah Bridge, and soon after arrived safely at home.

GENERAL RESULTS OF THE TOUR.

In summing up this account of our work, it will not, of course, be expected that I should make any attempt to tabulate spiritual results. To do that accurately would involve the possession of more than human powers of perception, for, we know that as far as man is concerned,—“The Kingdom of God cometh not with observation.” On the other hand there are certain broad effects which may fittingly be noticed as the outcome of itincrating toil. Mission work is “Sowing”; and there is something to be said about the quantity of seed sown, and the area of distribution, and the signs of productive soil. As to method, the good seed is sown in two principal ways: *First*, by the foolishness of preaching; and *second*, by the sale of Scriptures.

THE SPOKEN WORD is the great instrument of conversion in the hands of the Spirit. It is more potent in its influence, and more subtle in its working, than any other means of communicating religious truth. To its theme, which is the love of God, it brings the emphasis of personal gratitude and living conviction; its aim is directed by the wisdom of near sympathy, and the earnestness of friendly appeal: it presents its application in the light of changing experience, and with the logic of accumulated facts.

The value of personal speech with individuals, patient guidance in discussion, and careful dealing with prejudices, cannot be overestimated. Christianity is propagated by units, by the transmission from one heart to another of the truths of the Gospel. Christians are not made to order, they are born one by one. The position of the average hearer in a heathen land must therefore be well ascertained and rightly acknowledged. Certain ideas antagonistic to Christianity occupy his mind. Those ideas must be first dislodged, before

room can be found for the truth as it is in Jesus. Argument, persuasion, intreaty, every known form of appeal must be used in turn. His reason must be satisfied, his conscience stirred, his will moved. He must feel the force of the spoken word, or he will never believe it, and it is we who are responsible, not the Hindu, for its rejection, if we have spoken it in harsh unlovely tones, rendering no reason for the hope that is in us, and heedless of all the confusion which a change of religious belief presents to an honest mind.

With such convictions as these daily growing upon us, we uttered the Master's message during the six weeks of our Tour. We lectured in English; and preached, taught, and disputed in the vernacular, wherever we could get to a market, a school, or a bazar. Out of 1,426 large village circles in the Howrah district alone, we were able to visit only 75, yet we worked very hard, and chose centres dotted all over the district, from which light radiated to the country around. Many events, some of which have been mentioned in the course of the narrative, occurred to gladden our hearts in connection with this method of sowing the Gospel seed. If we were sometimes despondent, we were at least as often encouraged; and much apparent failure could be directly traced to lack of wisdom in ourselves.

The following letters from students who visited our boat at Hugli,* will serve to indicate both the bright and the dark side of our Mission work. They are given exact, and in full.

The first three are from Sidheswar Palit.

Bally Road, Hooghly.

10th January 1888.

DEAR SIR,

I am highly indebted to you for the multifarious advices I received at your hands during your sojourn here a few days ago. I attended, as you

are aware, the meeting held at Chinsurah. Your lecture was nobly delivered, worthy of the scion of the great Carey who had done so much good to this country. However, trusting upon your former assurance, I now beg to approach you with the following theological questions, which I hope you will kindly condescend to explain.

I. On the first place, what is meant by "Eternal Hell"? This expression recurs often in Milton's "Paradise-Lost", where the Enemy of God is represented as immured in the dark and dingy region of Hell, without any hope or prospect of escaping the racking torture of burning caldrons and red hot pincers.

Now, I shall prove that this expression and description do not at all correspond with the spirit of the Christian religion. God, according to that religion, is all-merciful. A man, however wicked and sinful, and however rebelling against the ordinances of the Creator, will secure salvation through *penitence*. In short, penitence, according to Christianity, is the door to salvation. But if we are to admit the above law, then the other proposition (that there is something like Eternal Hell) fails at once. How is it possible that an Eternal Hell can exist when there is some hope, nay certainty, of escaping it. A thing is said to be eternal "when it has neither beginning nor end." But as I have shown, the definition in a contradictory sense does not at all hold good. I have long pondered upon the above question without any success. I leave it now to your wider range of thoughts and comprehension.

II. Secondly, what is the "Aim of life"? This question was put by Mr. James at Chinsurah, but no satisfactory reason was shown.

III. Lastly, cannot salvation be secured without the aid of Christ?

For want of space I am unable to dwell in full length upon the last two questions. However, I hope you will kindly forgive my boldness and clear away my doubts.

I remain,

Yours faithfully,

S. PALIT.

In reply to a long letter written as answer to the above, I received the other two which are here subjoined.

Bally Road, Hooghly.

30th January 1888.

MY DEAR SIR,

I cannot express adequately in words the amount of gratitude I owe to you : in fact, I do not know how to thank you for your kindness in solving my difficulties. Your arguments are all clear and satisfactory. I shall write to you more fully on your return to Howrah. In the meantime

I remain,

Yours most sincerely,

SIDHESWAR PALIT.

Bally Road, Hooghly.

7th March 1888.

MY DEAR SIR,

I thank you most sincerely for the trouble you took in solving my difficulties a few days ago. I have kept your letter in my portfolio and shall read it up to the last day of my existence. I have long pondered over your arguments ; they seem to be all summed up with great force of logic and characteristic clearness of diction.

I shall avail myself of every opportunity to approach you with questions of this kind. I have commenced reading the Holy Bible, nay, have included it with the daily routine of my study. I am moreover reading the sermons, lectures &c. of the eminent men of the Christian world ; so the next time we fall to a discourse on theology you will see me much advanced in the knowledge of Christ and His doctrines.

Kindly send me any good Christian periodical which you deem fitted to our enlightenment. I think you have ample of this kind in your stall, which you may spare without any loss on your part.

Please let me know of your whereabouts at present. I shall write to you as soon as I receive your reply. I have much taxed your patience ; but hoping you will hold me always as a faithful friend of yours,

I beg to remain,

Yours sincerely,

SIDHESWAR PALIT.

So much for the bright side. It may be long before Sidheswar Palit becomes a Christian, but he will be genuine,

inasmuch as he is seeking the Truth, and the Truth will make him 'free.' A letter of another kind reveals a different motive ; sadly too common.

*Hooghly Branch School,
12th January 1888.*

SIR,

I have the honour to bring to your notice that as I have a great desire of that subject, which I told you when you have come to Hooghly. From long time I have a mind to convert myself into Christianity, but to my misfortune I have twice failed in my purpose. Now I always think that if I do that, where I will go? Will missionary fund assist me? because I will not be allowed to live in my house. Please reply me in the following address.

I remain,
Yours obedient boy,
SATISHCHANDRA CHAKRABATTY,
Senior, 6th year class.

THE SALE OF SCRIPTURES, as a method of Missionary work, calls for some explanation ; first in relation to the older plan of gratuitous distribution ; and second in the light of its practical working. If our object were simply to circulate the largest number of Scripture books, it would not be possible to justify any other method than that of free distribution. But our aim is to get the largest number of Scriptures *read*, not merely *got rid of*. People value what they pay for, especially Bengalis. You may rest assured in nine cases out of ten, that where a man is willing to part with current coin in exchange for a book, he means to read that book ; at all events he will not be likely to throw it away, he will keep it somewhere in the house, and many besides himself will probably read it. This is why we *sell* portions of Scripture, although we thereby weaken our statistics of results, and apparently curtail our sphere of usefulness, since it would be

easy to distribute *gratis* a thousand a day,—whereas it is difficult to sell a thousand a month.

During our trip we sold altogether 1,462 portions of the Bible, chiefly the four Gospels. This we regard as a very gratifying result, when we look back over the difficulties that stood in our way.

I had sometimes to sing or preach for two or three hours, without a moment's cessation, before a single copy could be disposed of. In order to be a successful salesman in this part of the country, the Missionary needs abundant patience, untiring energy, an ear deaf to insult and derision, and a tongue apt to answer all manner of foolish objections. In addition he must be able to arouse a desire to possess the sacred writings of foreigners, in the breasts of a people naturally apathetic, and trained for centuries to regard their own religion as the all-sufficient satisfaction for their souls' needs. It is a great task, frequently disappointing, often burdensome, physically and spiritually exhausting in no small degree. They will gather round the 'Saheb,'—these village folk,—and stand at ease for an hour at a time to be amused by his strange accent, appearance, and message, especially do they love to hear him sing; but he must wait a long time very often before any one of them will spend a pice on the purchase of a book.

He has frequently to put down insolence such as is offered to no other European, or rather to shame it down, since no Missionary will prejudice his cause, or compromise his doctrine by any display of anger, or the slightest exercise of physical force. In this land the Padre Saheb is regarded as a *sui generis*, and is treated with exceptional and very unpleasant distinction in all departments of life. His house-hold servants, free from the wholesome fear of kicking

and thrashing, do pretty much as they like, both with him and his belongings; schoolboys jostle him about in the streets; and a host of parasites crowd beneath the shelter of his benevolence, with an assurance of liberal provision which nothing can shake.

At other times he must try to dissipate prejudice while it is being busily sown in the minds of the people by fussy and angered Brahmins. They have the advantage of long recognized authority, and use it to the utmost in depreciation of the Gospel message and the Gospel books; while he stands forth as a strange advocate of a novel religion. Were it not that he knows the truth of the things whereof he speaks, he would often fall out of the ranks, depressed and hopeless.

In the light of such hindrances, we are thankful indeed to have sold 1,462 portions of Scripture:—yet we cannot but feel the comparative insignificance even of this result when we remember that in 1872 the population of Howrah district alone numbered 731,057 souls. This will suggest some idea of the work yet to be done.

And now, a last word on the subject of our *special needs*. We need, doubtless, most of all, increased spiritual qualification, and a large outpouring of Divine Blessing; and for these let us earnestly pray. But we need also many things that come within the range of human capability, and practical help. The seed has been sown, but the harvest might be greatly enriched if we had time and opportunity for the work of weeding and watching. Preaching needs to be followed up by frequent visitation and systematic teaching. To accomplish this we must have increased pecuniary help. Our financial resources are too limited to bear the expense of frequent travel. Yet much might be done if our coffers were



better filled. I have been asked to give a series of Lectures at Oolubariah, and would gladly go if the funds were forthcoming. The school at Goojerpoor presents a fine field for Christian education ; teachers and boys alike having begged for regular visitation. At Joypoor, the establishment of Christian schools is an urgent want. In every direction there are open doors, which we would gladly enter if we had the necessary means. The Missionary in this station is indeed supported by the Society at home :—but the strain of expenditure which his work involves, falls exclusively upon a fund consisting of voluntary contributions locally raised. I trust this statement of our financial weakness will arouse a generous response of Christian gifts.

Then there are many minor helps to effective work, which we sorely require, and for which I make bold to appeal to friends in England. A Magic Lantern is one. An itinerating missionary without a magic lantern loses many a golden opportunity of winning a hearing for the Gospel message. The views should be of the *best* kind, suitable for exhibition in town halls as well as in the village market.*

A Photographic Camera is another, and a Portable Harmonium is a third. We could also make use of any number of cheap Picture books and toys for children.

* See Appendix.

APPENDIX.

For the guidance of those friends who may wish to supply me with any one of the 'minor helps to effective work,' mentioned on page 97, a description is here subjoined of the *kind* of article which would probably be most useful in each case.

- I. *Magic Lantern* :—Hall's "Triplexicon" Dissolving View Lantern, with 4-inch Condensers; or E. G. Wood's "Dissolving Euphaneron."
- II. *Photographic Camera* :—Marion's "Unique Set"—for plates $6\frac{1}{2} \times 4\frac{3}{4}$. Messrs. Marion & Co.—22 and 23 Soho Square, London; or Sands' and Hunter's "Exhibition" Camera for plates of same size. Messrs. Sands and Hunter, 20 Cranbourn Street, Leicester Square, London.
- III. *Portable Harmonium* :—Specially constructed to suit the Indian climate,—all the pieces screwed together—none glued.
- IV. *Lantern Slides* :—If favoured with a Photographic Camera, I hope to prepare my own slides from transparent negatives,—and thus secure good sets of subjects illustrative of Mission Biography in India. In the meantime three sets of views, sent with the Lantern, would be extremely useful. They should be *all Photographic*. Views of the Holy Land—Egypt—England—America—or the Continent might be chosen.

